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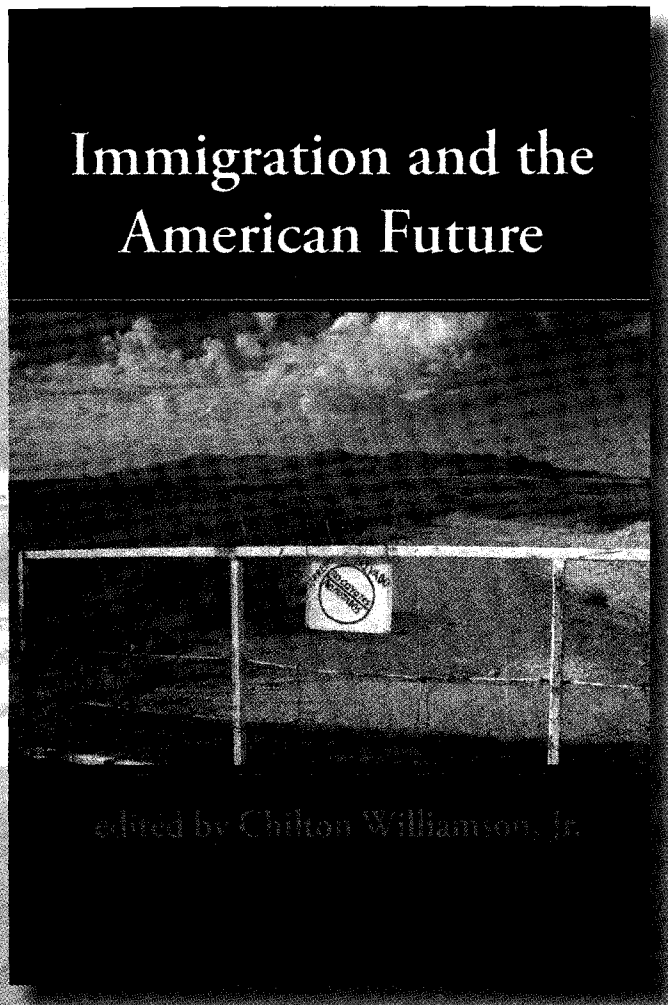


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*—From the Foreword, by Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

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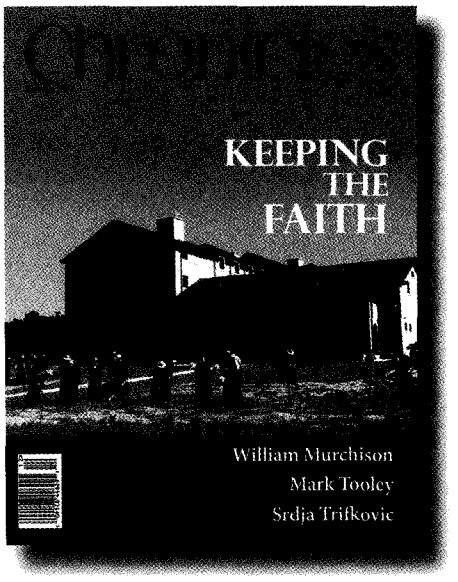


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## On Race and Fairness

In "Race and Racism" (*Views*, November) Tom Landess states that a seismic shift occurred in race relations with Strom Thurmond leading the Dixiecrats out of the Democratic National Convention in 1948. Now, in 1948, blacks were paying taxes (federal, state, and local). They saw that money used by politicians to foster second-rate education, housing, and healthcare opportunities.

In thinking about 1948, the question of fairness has to apply. It's one thing to think of African-Americans as not of the human race, but it's quite another to use their tax money to enrich the government's coffers.

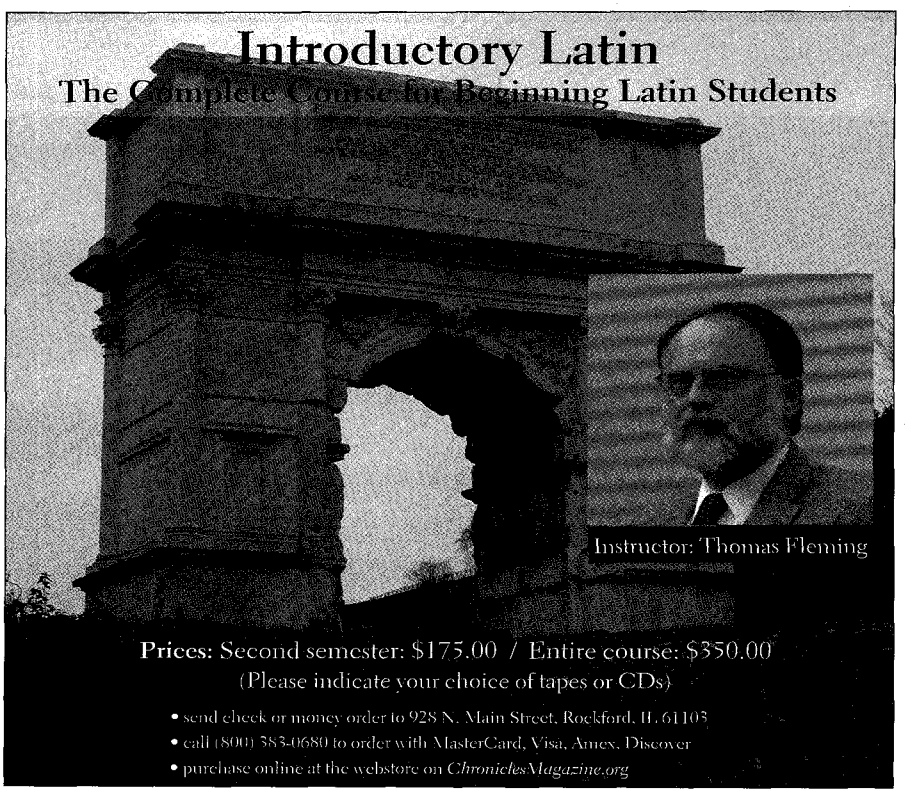
I'm also aware of the argument that paying taxes is always a compromise on how they will be used. But this would be comparable to paying taxes for a war you disapprove of (take your pick—Vietnam, Iraq) and then sending only blacks to fight it.

—*Ted Lederer*
*Kankakee, IL*

## Dr. Landess Replies:

I certainly agree that blacks paid taxes during the era of Jim Crow and that their schools and other public facilities were unfairly inferior to those of the whites. I could name other indignities they suffered under legalized segregation, and indeed I have done so elsewhere. However, here I mentioned the 1948 Democratic convention as a moment when charges of racism began to play a high-profile role in American politics. I believe the debate stirred up there eventually, though circuitously, led to the civil-rights movement and the abolition of Jim Crow laws.

These events occurred over 50 years ago. Several important indicators suggest that race relations in the South are more amicable today than in other regions and that the Northeast poses the greatest threat to racial harmony in America. Yet when the question of racism arises, people always want to talk about the way things were in Mississippi in 1950.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*by R. Cort Kirkwood*

# Obama and the Army of Sodom

Homosexuals coast-to-coast have been doing the slow burn in the past few months because their jug-eared leader, Barack Obama, has delayed fulfilling a key campaign promise: to scrap the military's "don't ask, don't tell" rule. The policy is actually federal law, and it's very simple: Keep your mouth shut, and you can serve. Ten months into office, and Obama still hadn't moved to end it, but he reupped the promise at a homosexual-rights dinner in October—not that his pink left wing will be satisfied.

Homosexuals should have known Obama would delay action on "don't ask, don't tell," which the Clinton administration crafted after its plans for homosexuals to serve openly went down in flames. Before his inauguration, Obama said he wouldn't move on the issue for some months, and perhaps not until 2010. The President's rookie year, an aide said, would be used for "consensus building." But they certainly didn't expect his solicitor general to argue for "don't ask, don't tell"—and against a homosexual G.I.—before the U.S. Supreme Court.

James Pietrangelo II is a veteran of both Iraq wars. In 2004, he emerged from the foot locker. The military kicked him out, and he battled to the high court. Arguing the government's side, Solicitor General Elena Kagan said a lower court of appeals had ruled correctly: "Applying the strong deference traditionally afforded to the Legislative and Executive Branches in the area of military affairs, the court of appeals properly upheld the statute." Indeed, Kagan used the classic (and correct) argument against homosexuals serving openly. The military's ban is "rationally related to the government's legitimate interest in military discipline and cohesion." The court refused to hear Pietrangelo's appeal.

Unsurprisingly, Pietrangelo exploded. "[Obama's] a coward, a bigot and a pathological liar," he told *Time* in June.

> This is a guy who spent more time picking out his dog, Bo, and playing with him on the White House lawn than he has working for equality for gay people. If there were millions of black people as second-class citizens, or millions of Jews or Irish, he would have acted immediately . . .

For blacks and Jews, he probably would have. But the Irish?

At any rate, you would think Pietrangelo's sentiments line up with those of angry homosexual militants everywhere, that anger being one reason Obama reiterated his promise at the annual dinner in October for the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). Said Obama:

> There are still fellow citizens, perhaps neighbors, even loved ones—good and decent people—who hold fast to outworn arguments and old attitudes. . . . We are moving ahead on Don't Ask Don't Tell. We should not be punishing patriotic Americans who have stepped forward to serve this country. We should be celebrating their willingness to show such courage and selflessness on behalf of their fellow citizens, especially when we're fighting two wars. . . . So I'm working with the Pentagon, its leadership, and the members of the House and Senate on ending this policy. Legislation has been introduced in the House to make this happen. I will end Don't Ask, Don't Tell. That's my commitment to you.

Of course, neither Obama nor his sodomite supporters will concede that the 99 percent of normal military men who have shown "courage and selflessness" might not want to spend all day every day wondering about the intentions of their comrades in arms. And once the homosexuals go in, the speech police will descend on the military, particularly the Marines, with the ferocity of Jimmy Doolittle's air raid on Japan. As Obama wrote in a statement he provided to the HRC during the campaign, repealing "don't ask, don't tell"

> will require the implementation of anti-harassment policies and protocols for dealing with abusive or discriminatory behavior. . . . The military must be our active partners in developing those policies and protocols.

You know what that means: No more homo jokes.

After the speech, the *New York Times* reported on a homosexual website where one poster wrote, "I could have watched one of his old campaign speeches and heard the same thing." That, of course, is true of any politician on any given issue. But for homosexuals, the point is well taken. They expected Obama to dump the policy. Instead, his solicitor general defended it.

It doesn't much matter in the long run. Given the military's surrender on women in combat, it will very likely raise the white flag on homosexuals once Obama's leftist administrators ratchet up the pressure. Pentagon brass aren't much known for moral and political courage. And average Americans, especially "conservatives" if you believe the polls, aren't helping. As *Time* reported in its story on Pietrangelo, 58 percent of conservatives

> now support openly gay people serving in uniform (nationally,



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69% support the change; when Clinton assumed office, a Gallup poll found 53% of those polled opposed lifting the ban).

In addition, "58% of self-described Republicans, and 60% of weekly churchgoers" also support homosexuals serving openly. So the polling data comport with the public's weakening grasp on sexual morality and why certain standards are important.

Consider again the blithe, uncritical view Obama expressed at the HRC festival: "There are still fellow citizens, perhaps neighbors, even loved ones—good and decent people—who hold fast to outworn arguments and old attitudes . . ." Well, at least he conceded that some people who find sodomy to be an abomination can be "good and decent." They are merely misguided. Obama's unsettling assumption is that the lifeless act between two homosexuals in a germy bathhouse or even a bedroom equates to the life-giving marital act of a man and a woman. This, of course, is what the Lavender Legionnaires want everyone to believe. If the polling data are correct, it appears that most Americans have bought the lie.

That means the Pentagon's decorated bureaucrats will likely surrender. The question is, how will that affect the Armed Forces? The introduction of women into nearly every military occupation specialty brought untold problems no one in the military wants to admit. And the introduction of openly declared sexual deviants will likely do the same. ©


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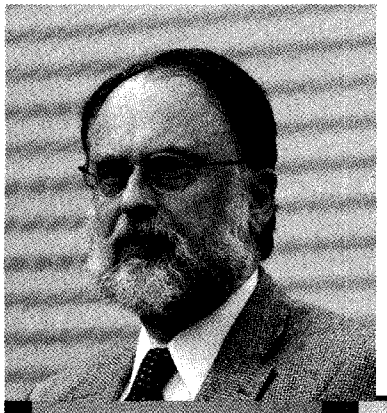

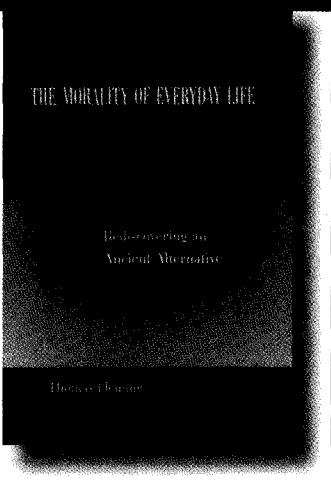


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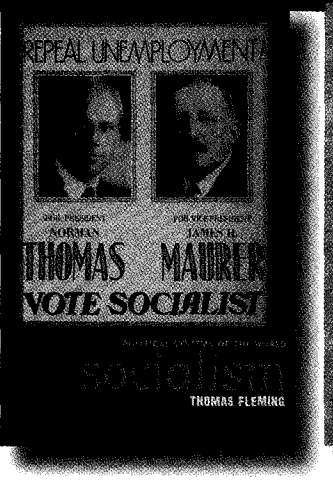


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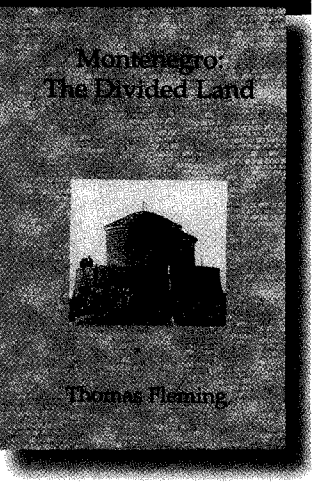


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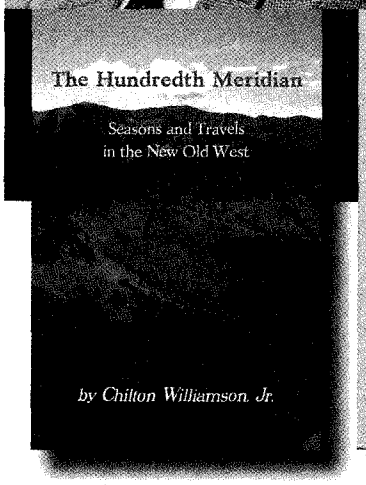


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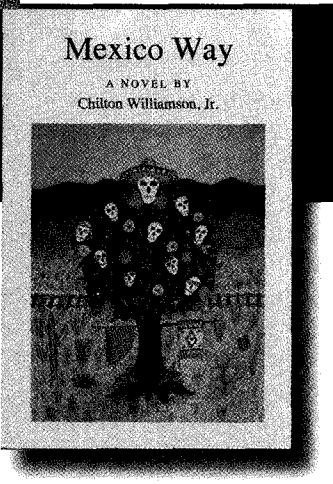


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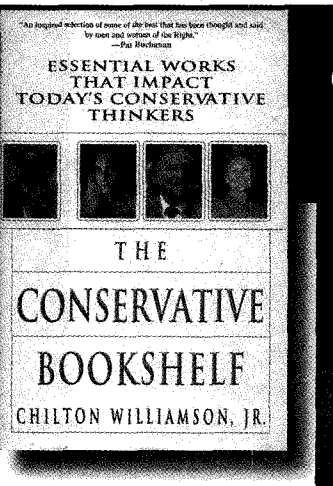


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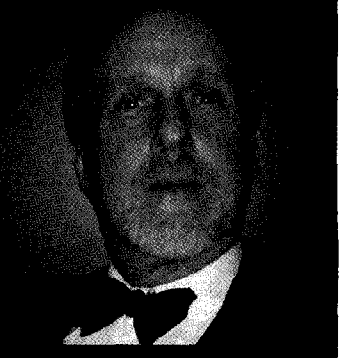

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## THE FAINTING IRISH

Yes, the Irish caved in and reversed their vote against the European Union's Lisbon Treaty. Gutless? Of course. But I've spent too many years in Dublin and Cork to be surprised. The Irish did the same thing when they voted *no* to an earlier treaty in June 2001. The next year they gave in to bullying from Brussels and returned to the polling stations to vote *yes*. If you are looking for some Fighting Irish, you won't find them in Ireland.

As I write this, the European Union is within one signature of the treaty being ratified and established as a European constitution. The treaty will for the first time make the European Union a "legal personality" or, as the headline writers have it, "a country called Europe."

This new country will have a president, a foreign secretary and diplomatic corps, armed forces, a supreme court, and a criminal-justice system. It already has a parliament that is based on population and omits any representation of sovereign states: The European Union will not be a federal system.

Since the Irish voted *yes* all that has been standing in the way of this "European country" has been the refusal of Václav Klaus, president of the Czech Republic, to sign the treaty. He is utterly opposed to it. Even after the Czech parliament ratified it, he insisted he must wait until a challenge to the treaty in his country's supreme court was decided. He also insisted the treaty raised the threat of new lawsuits by the families of Germans expelled from the Sudetenland. He said he wanted to see this threat removed before he would sign.

Alas, after the Irish vote, no one was expecting that President Klaus could hold out for more than a few weeks. The European Commission, the unelected politburo in which all European law originates, threatened that the Czech Republic could lose its commissioner if President Klaus continued to refuse to sign.

President Sarkozy of France and other European politicians made poisonous demands in personal phone calls, warning of "consequences" if President Klaus did not sign. In the European parliament, one German socialist member demanded the Czechs impeach their president. In Prague, the German ambassador actually went to see the president of the Czech supreme court to insist he hurry up his decision in the legal challenge to the treaty.

The reason for the pressure, and the reason for President Klaus's willingness to endure it, has been this: David Cameron, the leader of Britain's Conservative Party, is likely to succeed Gordon Brown as prime minister following a general election in the spring. Mr. Cameron has promised he will give the British people a referendum on the treaty if it is not yet in force when he takes office.

The Blair government broke its 2005 election promise to allow the British a referendum. Instead, the government forced ratification of the treaty through parliament in 2008. Millions of Britons were, and are, enraged by the betrayal. So Mr. Cameron and the Conservative Party have already drafted a bill for a referendum. They say they will present the bill to parliament as soon as they are in government—if the treaty is not yet in force.

No one in the European Union doubts that if the British have a chance to vote on the treaty, they will vote *no*. Brussels and euro-enthusiasts across Europe are frantic to get the treaty in place before Mr. Cameron walks into Number 10. Brussels knows that Britain, unlike Ireland, is too big to bully into voting twice. Ratification must be unanimous, so the new constitution for Europe would be in the dustbin. A British *no* would finish it.

However, many people suspect Mr. Cameron will be relieved if the treaty is in place when he takes office and he does not have to be the man who gave the British the chance to kill it. As for what he will do if the treaty is in force when he succeeds Gordon Brown, all the Conservative leader will say is that he "will not let matters rest there." The phrase is meaningless.

I recently spoke to Martin Howe, a senior barrister who contributed to the drafting of the Conservatives' bill for a referendum. I asked him what he thought Mr. Cameron would do if the treaty has been ratified by all 27 member-states before the time of the next British general election. Mr. Howe told me that, in that case, "legally it takes effect and supersedes earlier treaties. Then it cannot be amended or revoked except by further treaty or an instrument equivalent to a treaty, such as a protocol. Britain would need to get agreement of all other member-states for that."

This is unlikely to happen. Of course, there is another way Mr. Cameron could free Britain of the treaty. He could follow procedures laid down in the treaty itself for withdrawal from the European Union. This would take two years of negotiations, with terms having to be agreed upon by all the other member-states. It is unlikely the other states would be willing to give good terms to Britain. They would try to frighten the United Kingdom into staying.

The ploy would probably work. Mr. Cameron is not the kind of man who has the courage to stand on the White Cliffs of Dover, fix his gaze on storm clouds rolling in from the Continent and declare, "Very well, then, alone." That kind of British Conservative died off long ago.

*—Mary Ellen Synon*

## LEFT TURN IN GREECE

Security has always been a key issue for conservatives and nationalists worldwide. But that's not the case in Greece. So voters in the homeland of democracy, displeased by riots and anarchy, the inability of the govern-



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ment to put down the protests, and the effects of the financial crisis, have reacted angrily against the "conservatives" on whose watch the chaos took place.

In the national election held on October 4, they voted against the "right-wing" ruling party, New Democracy, giving it only 33.48 percent of the vote. (One year ago it was leading the polls.) Instead, Greeks voted for the "progressive," pro-immigration, pro-American (and explicitly pro-Obama) socialist party PASOK (43.92 percent), which had threatened during the election campaign to annul agreements signed with Russia for a new energy pipeline in favor of American interests and an agreement with a Chinese state-owned company regarding Piraeus harbor. A party with a multicultural approach and an obsession with "human rights," PASOK also threatened to naturalize 200,000 immigrants. Greece is becoming another multicultural American base.

The decision of the Greek electorate is difficult to explain. Today, Spain, Portugal, and Great Britain are the only other E.U. states with socialist governments. The Labor Party in Britain is disintegrating, while in Spain, the socialists lag behind in the polls. In Portugal, the socialists recently managed to renew their mandate in a landslide victory. But everywhere else in Europe—including Italy, France, and Germany—right-wing governments rule. (In Germany, the Christian Democrats recently won the election for parliament, and the Social Democrats scored their lowest since the late 1940's). In the European parliament, the European People's Party is more than dominant.

In Greece, however, New Democracy has adopted a centrist strategy and liberal rhetoric in an attempt to attract "moderate" voters. The exponent of this silly "middle ground" theory, an unpopular advisor to ex-prime minister Kostas Karamanlis, has caused a catastrophe for the right in Greece. The numbers speak for themselves: New Democracy has paid a very high price for its left-wing turn.

The imminent result of this left turn by Greek voters will be more immigrants and naturalizations in Greece, more taxation, and the adoption of policies to serve American (and multinational-business) interests. In the age of multiculturalism, globalization, and American dominance, there is no room for national sovereignty and independence.

*—Nikos Hidiroglou*

## LEAVING THE ELCA

The recent decision by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to ordain active homosexuals and adopt a more permissive attitude toward fornication has put many parish churches in the difficult position of choosing whether to remain in the ELCA. One such church is Prince of Peace Lutheran in Rockton, Illinois, a village of some 5,000 souls located just a little to the north of *Chronicles*' hometown.

Prince of Peace is deeply upset by the ELCA's move. In the church's monthly bulletin, Pastor Douglas Johnson emphasizes that the "real issue" isn't sex but "the authority of Scripture and how God's word in Scripture is rightly interpreted." The church has assembled a task force to determine its plans. Prince of Peace has two options: It can remain in the ELCA, in a position of confessional resistance, or it can go elsewhere.

The church is seriously considering two other relatively conservative Lutheran bodies. The first is Lutheran CORE (Coalition for Renewal), an umbrella organization that includes several reform movements within the ELCA. At a recent Lutheran CORE gathering on September 26 in Minneapolis, 1,200 people showed up instead of the anticipated 300 to 400. Registration had to close two weeks before the event. Those 1,200 voted to form a freestanding synod, which would strive for the "reconfiguration of Lutheranism in North America."

The second is Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), an association of independent Lutherans and congregations with goals similar to those of Lutheran CORE. A congregation can simultaneously have membership in the ELCA, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, or another church body and still be a part of LCMC. Community Church of Joy in Glendale, Arizona—formerly the tenth-largest congregation in the ELCA—voted on June 28 to disaffiliate with the ELCA and join the LCMC, and other congregations are expected to follow suit.

These movements have the ELCA worried. In response to all the leaving, Vice President Carlos Peña issued a letter on October 23 entitled "Why Lord?" Peña relates his experiences losing his business after Hurricane Ike hit Texas and compares this


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storm to the one facing the ELCA. After Ike, he says, people came together. They welcomed "new citizens and businesses, both old and new." His business just had a "grand re-opening," and it is rolling on even stronger than before.

The ELCA can do the same—but not if all those pesky churches keep leaving. Peña makes it clear that, like any business, the church cannot operate on goodwill alone: "If you are considering redirecting benevolence, I would urge reconsideration. We must remember that it is our congregations working together through the ELCA that bring about amazing things. Together, we are the church. If your numbers were to diminish, it would lessen our capacity to carry out God's mission."

Translation: Don't leave! We need your money!

The ELCA was formed in 1988 by union of three other bodies—the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America (both of which were combinations of older Lutheran church bodies), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, a collection of Lutheran congregations that had left the Missouri Synod over the latter's insistence on the inerrancy of the Bible. In an effort to keep such a disparate array of Lutherans together, the ELCA has always gone with the lowest common denominator—the most liberal doctrines.

Across North America, ELCA parishioners are wondering what to do next. Many churches are trying to avoid dealing with the problem, hoping that the new changes won't affect them. The bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA, the Rev. Dr. Gary Wollersheim, has attempted to reassure objectors: "If you are in a congregation that does not see the need to change your practices in response to these decisions, no one will force you to do so. This will be true of many of the congregations in the Northern Illinois Synod. Specifically, this means you will not be required to interview or extend a call to a gay or lesbian pastor in a faithful committed relationship. You will not be expected to bless same gender [*sic*] covenant relationships."

Many ELCA churches may grasp at this hope. They have nice, male pastors who are married to women; they aren't anticipating the need to call a new pastor anytime soon; and they have no homosexual couples seeking a blessing for sodomy.

For those congregations who anticipate that they will one day have to come to grips with the ELCA's heresy, the future remains uncertain. Lutheran CORE and the LCMC both accept female clergy within their ranks and even go to some length to defend the practice as biblical. It is the same defense that provided the rationale for the ELCA's ordination of open, active homosexuals.

—*Nicole M. Kooistra*

## OBITER DICTA

Our poet this month is **Jack Butler**. He has published eight books in sixteen editions worldwide (including three British editions and one translation into Japanese). He has published frequently in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Poetry*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Los Angeles Times Book Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *New Orleans Review*, and many other journals.

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Our interior art is provided by **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson, our designer, received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

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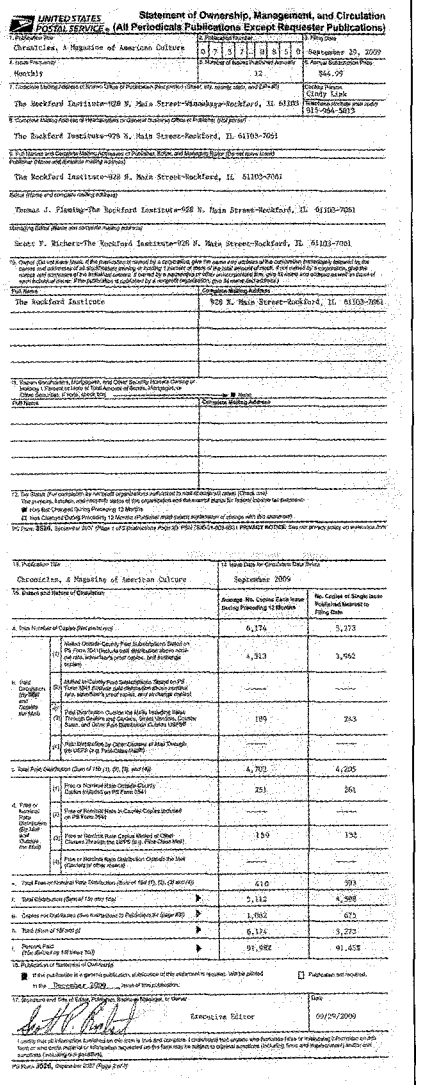

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*by Thomas Fleming*

# Going Through the Motions

I did not expect to like the Basilica of Sacré Coeur, which is why I had never bothered to go up to Montmartre. The basilica was commissioned by Catholics who had survived the Paris Commune of 1870-71, when churches were destroyed and the faithful were persecuted. Even as the revolution was sputtering out, the communists murdered a number of hostages, including Msgr. Georges Darboy, archbishop of Paris. Sacré Coeur, whose construction took nearly 40 years, was designed to tell the world that the Catholic Church had been restored to Her proper place in the world, but its hysterical "Romano-Byzantine" style—which represents a conscious rejection of the baroque—reminds me less of Hagia Sophia or the *duomo* in Pisa than of the Taj Mahal.

Reactionaries, alas, almost always ruin whatever good remains in a tradition. The Counter-Reformation had noble intentions, but, in spreading baroque church construction around the world, the Jesuits obscured a thousand years of Christian history. Rome's churches became monuments to bad taste until Blessed Pius IX began stripping a few ancient structures of the garish plaster fondant with which they had been encrusted since the days of Pietro da Cortona. In Mexico, where the taste runs naturally—and brilliantly—to the grotesque, the baroque style found a congenial home. In Rome, however, it is a disaster that could not be mitigated even by the undoubted genius of Bernini and Maderno, and a visit to the Jesù is a more frightening prospect than the imagined terrors of the Inquisition.

So it was with a lighter heart—and an empty stomach—that I watched the suburbs of Paris flash by the Autoroute. Judge Robert Reavis, the perpetual pilgrim who suggested the trip, was behind the wheel. We head south out of Paris on the A10 toward Orléans and cut west, on slower roads, to Bourges, capital of the former province of Berry, where we spend two slow days, walking in the gentle rain and admiring its ancient cathedral, one of the most beautiful and harmonious Gothic churches in France.

Berry is lovely country. It has the good fortune to be generally unremarkable. There are no mountains or beaches, and neither François I nor Louis XIV singled it out as the location for the endless series of ever more extravagant chateaux that are the glory of the Loire Valley, a glory that is humiliated annually by caravans of tour buses. For the drive from Bourges to Fontgombault Abbey, we avoid main roads and find ourselves stuck behind gravel trucks and crews filling in the holes on the old two-lane blacktop threading its way between lush farm fields broken up by artfully scattered copses. We kill a bit of time deliberately getting lost in Le Blanc, a comfortable and unbusy town on the Creuse River. Montmartre seems very far away, already, and as we drive into the grounds of the abbey, all Paris disappears.

Fontgombault, which was established in the 11th century as a Benedictine monastery, has undergone many vicissitudes. Calvinists sacked the monastery in 1569, and, though it was restored, the Calvinists' spiritual descendants wrecked many buildings during the French Revolution. The guest master, Dom Eric Chevreaux, is kind enough to take us on a tour of the grounds the first day of our stay. When we get to the rear of the church, he points out the distinct line in the masonry that marks the start of the rebuilding. It is something like the high-water mark that shows the height of a disastrous flood, but it is also a border between despair and hope.

In the mid-19th century, Trappists were given the right to establish a community, but only if they established a boys' school, but in 1905 the Masonic French government renewed its persecution of the Church. The Trappists were expelled, and the monastery was sold to a manufacturer and turned into a button factory. Restored as a diocesan seminary, Fontgombault was abandoned in 1948, when the lack of vocations resulted in the closing of the seminary.

Fontgombault did not remain empty for long. It was reestablished as a Benedictine community by a group of monks from Solesmes, which had led the way in the restoration of Gregorian chant. Ironically, at Solesmes itself, the Gregorian chant is used only in the context of the Novus Ordo Mass that followed in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. Those who wish to experience the fullness of the Solesmes tradition must go to Fontgombault or to one of the daughter houses that have been established.

It will take more than a few months to appreciate the few days I spent at the abbey, and no one in these late degenerate days can hope to equal the description given by the late John Senior, whose visit to Fontgombault has inspired a generation of his students and readers. I am most impressed by the quiet, which is not merely the absence of noise, but real peace and tranquility. No one here "does" anything, in the American sense of the word *do*, except for Tom the retired American who moved here with



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his wife. Tom and a French comrade, with whom he can communicate only by gestures and a few words like *dwat*, *gosh*, and *vite*, cut the grass, chip and refresh the paint, rebuild the window frames—any repair, in other words, that an ancient monastery requires. And when Tom is not cutting or sawing, he is in the church for Matins or Lauds, Terce, Vespers, or Compline.

In years past, I supposed that monks, day after day, did nothing, at least nothing that could possibly interest me. It is true that, from the beginning of Western monasticism, the injunction was *orare et laborare*, but what sort of labor? Exhausting drudgery, whether in the fields or in the scriptorium. For any good American, this seems like a perverse evasion of our highest human duty, to accomplish some important work and to improve the art or skills or business we have inherited from earlier generations. Progress is a grim business of "creative destruction" that requires us to sacrifice whatever joy we might have had in preserving and using what our fathers bequeathed to us in the hope that our grandchildren will similarly turn up their noses at us and all our works.

Yes, the monks do nothing or very nearly nothing, except to obey the Two Great Commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Monks of every order fulfill the latter commandment, not only in their great charitable works of preaching and teaching, healing and tending, but in their relations with one another, which are governed in principle by the rule of Christian love.

The first commandment, though, is their supreme duty, or, to give it the Latin word, their *officium* or office, the endlessly recurring services of prayers and readings that fill up most of their days and much of their nights. How they survive on such little sleep amazes me. Though the lack of sleep may contribute to the dreamlike atmosphere of a monastery, the tranquility has a deeper source than self-induced insomnia. It is the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

My skeptical ex-Catholic father would have asked, "So what is all the good of such flummery and mumbo-jumbo? To induce a condition of mental numbness? And what is their greatest accomplishment if not the mindless repetition of things that have been done over and over for two thousand years?"

Excepting the "mindless" bit, I should say, "Yes, it is a great (if not the greatest) accomplishment to have gone through the same motions so many times for so many centuries. We do not always know what or why we are doing. Indeed, most of what we think we know we take on trust from a higher authority, like the television weatherman or an ill-educated high-school teacher who once told us something about Galileo. Jefferson, in a letter to a young nephew, described politeness as artificial good humor (a word that meant something like temperament or character): 'it covers the natural want of it, and ends by rendering habitual a substitute nearly equivalent to the real virtue.'" That observation, elevated to the spiritual level, suggests that if we go through the same motions and repeat the same words our distant ancestors did, we may some day possess something of their Christian virtues.

The habitual and unreflective repetition of ancient customs has little in common with ideological movements that aim at restoring some lost Golden Age. As well-intentioned as such movements are—and you, my readers, know some of their names and acronyms, both secular and religious—they more often displace than restore the ancient traditions they profess. The Counter-Reformation may have been a necessity, but it imposed a militant hierarchy on top of the ruins of the medieval Church, and the Counter-Reformation's latter-day disciples campaign for issues—overturning laws protecting abortion and homosexuality, defending democratic capitalism—while remaining, in some cases, indifferent to the liturgical exercises that connect all faithful Christians of every generation in a prayer that is carried to Heaven itself.

Religious traditions are like the piece of rope you take on a camping trip, never knowing (as Sam Gamgee understood) when you might need it. In the bookshop at Fontgombault I find an amazing work: *Aristote au Mont Saint-Michel*, by the medievalist Sylvain Gouguenheim. What Gouguenheim proves beyond any doubt is that Europe did not depend on the Muslims for its knowledge of Aristotelian philosophy and science but that, in fact, the monks at Mont Saint-Michel had maintained a tradition of translating the Greek into Latin. From quotations and echoes in later writers, their translations can be shown to have exerted a profound influence on medieval thought. Neither the copyists nor even the translators necessarily understood Aristotle's significance, but to have played any part in the preservation of rational thought is a magnificent accomplishment.

American conservatives like to compare the later Roman Empire with the United States and wonder when our civilization will collapse. I always tell them the same thing: It collapsed before I was born. Whatever had survived the 19th century was destroyed in World War I. None of us has ever lived in anything but the Dark Age in which contempt for tradition and virtue is matched by contempt for truth. In this Darker Age, it is once again monks who are preserving the last spark of the light of the West. And not just in France. Fontgombault has established a daughter house at Clear Creek in the improbable state of Oklahoma. The monks of Clear Creek are men of great courage and faith, and we ordinary men and women who visit them are as refreshed as we would be by taking a dip in the cool waters of Clear Creek on a summer's day.

Few of us are cut out to be monks or nuns or priests, but all of us, if we decide to live well rather than earn much, have jobs to do worth doing, Tom the fix-it man as much as Father Abbot, and the Benedictine motto will serve a layman as well as it has served the monks of the past 1,500 years: Work and Pray. ◇



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## An Inmate Crew,

seven rough characters,
stood in silhouette by their truck.
The temp was a hundred and one or worse.
Noon sun beat on the lake.

They stared into the hazy dazzle of water
as if to measure its extent,
how it touched the Arkansas and later
the Mississippi and went

from there to the Gulf and the sea and a white boat
and freedom and salt. Whatever they saw,
resting from work in the blinding heat,
manacled paw to paw,

they saw like a pride of cats, looking at once
in the same direction. It wasn't
exactly longing in their stance.
More like readiness, the present.

—*Jack Butler*



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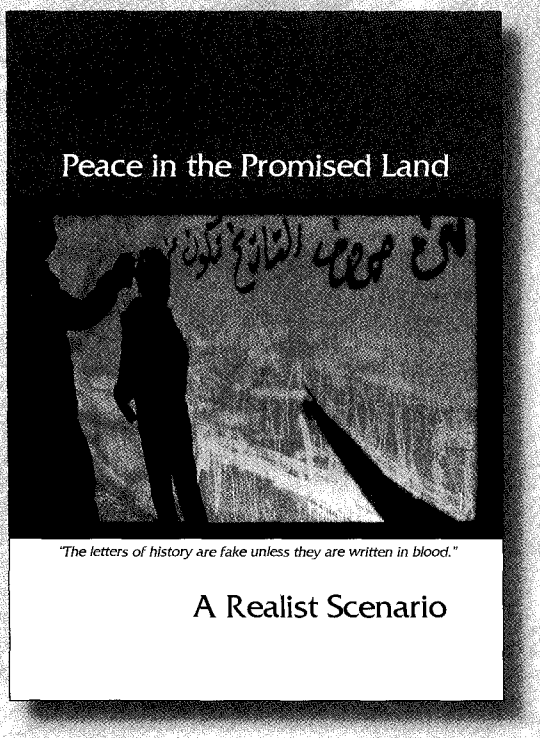


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# Recovering the Dignity of Truth

## Episcopalians and/or Anglicans

**by William Murchison**

We Episcopalians—we're just so special, don't you know? We worship in such special ways. Our churches look so special, as do we ourselves—an indication of our social gifts. And when we fight, when we commence to break the church furniture over one another's heads—at such moments we're just, you might say, disgustingly, regurgitatingly special; so special that many of us hope no one is watching. We know better than that, nonetheless. A specially contrived disaster, in particular one with spiritual implications, is for many irresistible. Our ongoing disaster is one of those.

Here, as I write, is a compelling headline from the *New York Times*: "Breakaway Church Gives Up Property." A California parish of the Episcopal Church—in its own mind, a former parish, having disaffiliated from the official church three years earlier—is surrendering title to its 85-year-old church building and, along with that, all claim to endowment monies, prized gifts of silver and silk, all that gave St. Luke's in La Crescenta that certain Anglican cachet. Memories, too, and historical associations: Those go by the boards. It's off to a new place—a rented chapel in a Seventh Day Adventist church in Glendale—and a new start, one untainted by associations with that once very special institution, the Episcopal Church.

Sagas like that of St. Luke's occur with startling regularity now that thousands of the Episcopal Church's proudest, devoutest sons and daughters have decided to chuck it to the Church; to walk as far away from it as possible in order to . . . the right word, I think, is *restore*. "Restoration" catches the spirit of the enterprise. A proud, prized structure is off plumb, with windowpanes broken and ceilings in ruins; in come the plasterers, carpenters, and plumbers to put things right again. That is how it is with the various renovation crews toiling to put right the Anglican franchise in North America.

Both within and without the Episcopal Church, push-back time has come in earnest. Waggled fingers and gentle reproaches no longer suffice. Episcopalians want something done about a wayward establishment—however pleasing its manners and decorative appointments—that has come closely to resemble *The Huffington Post* at prayer, assuming anyone at *The Huffington Post* would dream of praying.

Last June, in Bedford, Texas, a suburb wedged between Dallas and Fort Worth, an assembly from around the country made up mostly of ex-Episcopalians aggrieved by the Episcopal Church's affection for loose, liberal theology formed a religious association of its own—an Anglican association. (*Anglican*, I should note, is the adjective that applies to all member churches of the worldwide Anglican Communion, headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the Church of England at its spiritual center.) The new association to which I refer is called the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA); it is a coalition of varied groups that in recent years have sought to reverse the Episcopal lurch toward a kind of well-mannered secularism. The ACNA has its own constitution, its own governing body, its own back-door entrance to the Anglican Communion through an arrangement called "full communion" with two officially recognized Anglican provinces, Nigeria and Uganda. It proclaims Anglican theology, uses the Book of Common Prayer, and clothes its priests in Anglican vestments.

Wouldn't you say this outfit is Anglican? Most onlookers would. Not so the Episcopal establishment, which drove St. Luke's from its Southern California premises, having bested the parish earlier in a civil lawsuit. If no one particularly loves the modern Episcopal Church, the legal fraternity must. The EC dumps barrels of money on the lawyers it hires to contest the right of any secessionist parish or diocese to keep its property. The Episcopal Church wants that property. To do what with? To keep "Episcopal" as opposed to Anglican worship going there.

Another thing the Episcopal Church and its presiding bishop, Mrs. Katharine Jefferts Schori, like to do is depose departing clergy—in other words, declare them non-clergy, which they clearly aren't, but the establishment must get its kicks somehow. Watching its membership and finances decline as a result of nonevangelism and the embrace of innovations—conspicuously, the gay-rights cause—provides no kicks. Prosecuting, if not persecuting, traditionalists gives Episcopal liberals (an increasingly tautological term) a sense of power and righteousness. (Never mind Saint Paul, whom the choleric liberal Bishop John Spong identifies as a "self-loathing homosexual," concerning the duty of Christians to avoid civil lawsuits. When you want other folks' property, you gotta fight 'em, kick 'em in the teeth, hurt 'em bad!)

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*William Murchison is a corresponding editor for* Chronicles *and the author of* Mortal Follies: Episcopalians and the Crisis of Mainline Christianity.



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A sizable number of theological conservatives remain inside the Episcopal Church, preferring the inside to the outside strategy: Don't give the wretches (beloved as they certainly must be in theological terms) the satisfaction of running the joint to their own satisfaction. (I should note, in fulfillment of my full-disclosure obligation, that I remain a member of a large, orthodox parish in a large, generally orthodox diocese, that of Dallas.) There is among us a rebellious reluctance to surrender territory long held, sometimes at great cost.

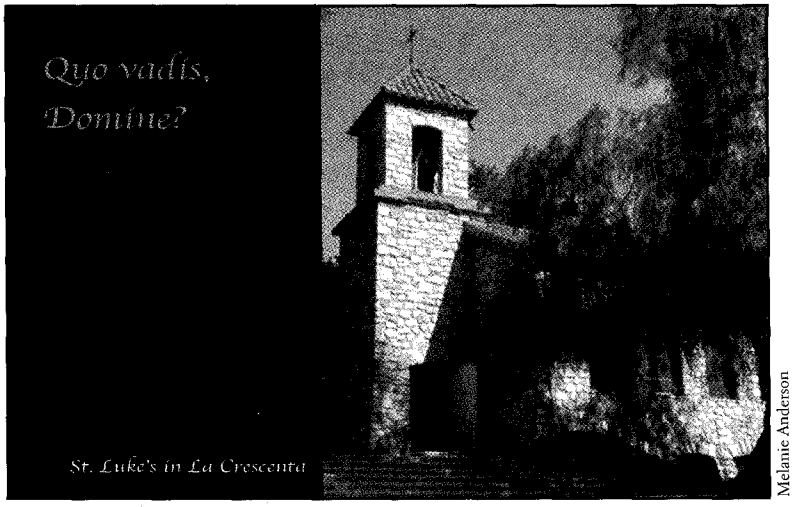
But I wouldn't pay disrespect to the secessionists by way of affirming a contradictory strategy. Secession isn't always a winning idea—*cf.* the 1861-65 unpleasantness. In less bellicose contexts, it can set up a useful trial of rivals. I think that may be the effect of the Anglican secession.

If you look closely at the 21st-century Episcopal Church, you strain the eyeballs for indications of dynamism and vigor. Whereas in the mid-1960's there were 3.6 million Episcopalians, it strains credulity to accept the church's estimate of even 2.1 million today. Experienced observers think the number is far, far lower than that—maybe less than a million if you count those who actually show up at church. The financial/economic crisis has rendered various parishes and dioceses barely viable.

Why wouldn't people come? Isn't this a church of vast prestige, with a history of rich commitment to social service, as well as to the religious basics? Don't people still show up to slake their religious faith in the drama and ceremony of Episcopal worship? Yes, to all this.

A couple of problems intervene. First, the present age isn't as unquestioningly religious as, say, the 1950's were, and even the early 1960's. A secularist mood overhangs life, soaking up and rechanneling faith in things unseen but believed in. Barack Obama—nominal Christian, at least by comparison with his recent predecessors—is the fitting leader for such an age. I happened the other night upon a TV screening of the 1953 blockbuster *The Robe* and wondered who would submit such a movie today for public consumption. Mel Gibson? Notice how no other moviemaker has sought to build on the explicit Christianity of *The Passion of the Christ.*

Then there's a second problem. The Episcopal Church at large—as contrasted with the church writ small, in parish and human terms—appears to have lost interest in the knotty old questions of sin and salvation, save perhaps as they relate to voting Republican or denying the necessity of taxpayer-financed healthcare. There wasn't a specific moment when the church's leadership turned a scornful glance on proponents of the old creeds, the old teachings, the old understandings of God as exacting overseer of our passions Who sent His Son as deliverer from those passions. The Church didn't precisely deny the relevance of Jesus to a high-tech age. Rather, it put new spins on old words. Sin was social. We were to repent of perpetrating social injustice. Social justice, it turned out, consisted in affirming and promoting the rights of discrete groups of Americans—to begin with, women, then homosexuals. Interest grows in "transgendered" people and their quest for affirmation. Just when you think the Episcopal Church has run out of social/political causes to endorse . . . you're wrong. It comes up with more—to the exasperation of Episcopalians who believe in fairness and justice but would like due attention paid by the church to the parlous state of all mankind, and to the consequent need for confession and repentance.



Melanie Anderson

The Episcopal Church was always a socially active church, crusading for fairness in the workplace, and eventually for the embrace of all Americans—yes, that meant blacks, too—as children of God. The emergence of women as the next class to be liberated tickled Episcopal sensibilities. The church voted in 1976, contradicting historic understandings, to ordain women as priests. When homosexuals became the next to clamor for acceptance, in stepped the Episcopal Church once more, demonstrating its zeal for the cause by consecrating an openly "gay" priest—one who had abandoned his lawful wedded wife and his daughters—as bishop of New Hampshire. At the Anaheim General Convention last summer, deputies and bishops moved decisively toward the blessing of same-sex unions.

In family situations, as we know, fundamental disagreements on values generally precipitate divorce. How much deeper do disagreements get than those over the life questions, from abortion to same-sex "marriage"? The homosexual bishop's handiwork was showing conservatives where they stood in Today's Episcopal Church—namely, outside. All right, many said. If that's how things are, let's make it official. So out they streamed—four dioceses, along with hundreds of parishes, under circumstances still to be sorted out legally. The conservatives, like those at St. Luke's, La Crescenta, maintain the right to property into which they have poured sweat and treasure. In a small number of cases, like that of Dallas, bishops permitted buyouts of the property. Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori's allies aren't having any of that peaceful secession stuff. Off to court! There's nothing, after all, like a good judicial ruling to settle a rebel's hash.



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The lawsuits of course miss the point of the whole thing, which is, will God bless the labors of those who proclaim the traditional Faith or those who seek to remodel it for a new age? It is what you might call a leading question. Why, we're for the Faith, just as much as anyone else, the tribe of Jefferts Schori replies. All we want to do is unfold its newly discovered riches—inclusion, social justice, *etc.*—and what's wrong with that? One thing wrong, possibly, is that the 21st-century Episcopal Church's concerns mirror those of the secular society, into whose embrace the church shows signs of fainting expectantly. Why? Because, possibly, that way lies social approval and fulfillment.

**In family situations, as we know, fundamental disagreements on values generally precipitate divorce. How much deeper do disagreements get than those over the life questions, from abortion to same-sex "marriage"? The homosexual bishop's handiwork was showing conservatives where they stood in Today's Episcopal Church—namely, outside. All right, many said. If that's how things are, let's make it official. So out they streamed—four dioceses, along with hundreds of parishes, under circumstances still to be sorted out legally.**

There's an obvious objection here. If the Episcopal Church is so in tune with modern society, why is it shrinking instead of growing? Because it's out of tune with society's deeper needs? The contest between the Episcopal establishment and its rebels—the ACNA, the conservative dioceses—could prove instrumental in defining what truly compels: the massaging of egos and grievances or the presentation of truths that align with the one great Truth that the Lord is God, that the Jesus Who rose from the dead is His Son, and that the Holy Ghost is Comforter rather than herald of new, previously unsuspected revelations. It is ground on which the conservatives might actually do pretty well.

Has the church been so wrong so long? The presiding bishop and her acolytes assert the correctness of their position, but proof awaits. Last summer at the General Convention Mrs. Jefferts Schori asserted that belief in individual salvation is heresy, salvation being social as it were. Critics of such a seemingly novel viewpoint spoke out sharply. Mrs. Jefferts Schori acted as though she had noted no more than the color of the sky at midday or the sweetness of angel food cake. Of course nobody "alone can be in right relationship with God." What was the fuss about?

The Episcopal Church and its critics, from the inside or the outside, face a common hazard in their respective presentations of truth. It is the modern hazard of looking just too buttoned up, no matter what viewpoints one might uphold and assert. Modernity may or may not affirm the Episcopal preference for liturgy and ritual over whooping and clapping (though both expressions of the spirit take place more often than before in Episcopal churches). Seeming to offer "downtrodden minorities" a way other than political-style affirmation could also be a loser, just like too much emphasis on a Book in which the characters dress funny and say weird things.

Perhaps one shouldn't lay short odds on that possibility. The stout contention of traditionalists is that sinners—and that's everyone—yearn, knowingly or not, for the assurance of God's love, meaning more than a pat on the head, a squeeze of the arm. I for one don't worry greatly that internal squabbles over matters such as women's ordination (some in the ACNA favor and practice it, others oppose and ban it) will deflect the witness of those who want truly to witness, not prosecute a lawsuit or stamp on critics with a fury best reserved for crickets.

The boat of the Christian Church, and not just in its Episcopal manifestation, is launched on rough seas. I have an intuition nonetheless. It is that the present age (yes, this one) may afford Christians a sublime moment for evangelism—yes, evangelism, the winning of souls, the conversion of the unconverted. The present age—I mean, all you have to do is look at our poor presiding bishop, who bleeds melancholy at every pore—seems frantically unhappy and disoriented. Families disintegrate. The oldest institutions lose cachet and respect. A blur of opinions and viewpoints blinds the sight. Self-absorption and narcissism sink their hooks into the realms of ideas and practice.

Whither? *Quo vadis, Domine*? The Church was formed and commissioned both to ask and answer such questions, a larger task than Congress or the Supreme Court or the United Nations seems equipped to essay. I note the response of the senior warden of St. Luke's parish, one Debbie Kollgaard, to the decidedly unpleasant experience of being kicked out of her parish by her spiritual leaders. "I cannot compromise my faith," she said. "What I have is more important than any property." When liberals talk with such generous resolution about their stake in the battles ahead, it may be time to take them seriously. Not quite yet. Not while lawyers do the talking for them.

The new age of evangelism—led by whomever or, likelier still, vast numbers of whomevers—will seek to awaken the culture to the old, deep truth of existence. It will explain the human plight and its divinely provided escape hatch in terms so plain it won't be recognized how unplain the explanation seemed to the sufferers of late modernity, including those encased in the material wonders of the first decade of the Third Christian Millennium.

It may be remembered, when the time comes, that a once-grand, once-grave old church, the Episcopal Church, conspired as long as possible to keep at bay the architects of the awakening. Or it may not be remembered at all. ◁



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# Fighting for Orthodoxy Among the Methodists

## Some Good News

**by Mark Tooley**

Melanie Anderson

The Episcopal Church, with two million members, drove off the cliff in 2003 by electing its first openly homosexual bishop. In 2005, the United Church of Christ (1.1 million members) officially endorsed same-sex "marriage," though the UCC had already long been ordaining active homosexuals. This year, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (4.9 million members), by a surprisingly large margin, approved a new policy allowing homosexual clergy and countenancing sex outside of marriage for heterosexuals. Also this year, the three-million-member Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) turned back another attempt to liberalize its orthodox teachings about marriage and sex. But liberals are persistent; they will try again.

Among the historic Mainline Protestant denominations, only the United Methodist Church seems poised for a decisive return to orthodoxy after nearly a century-long slide into liberalism. Why? Methodists, unlike Anglicans, Lutherans, and Calvinists, are not strongly confessional or historically renowned for theological brilliance. They are the largest group of the Mainliners, and typically are among its most Middle American and middlebrow.

Maybe the ordinariness of Methodists was ultimately the church's protection. Even while its seminaries went solidly liberal by the 1920's, and the church bureaucracy became infamous for its once *avant-garde* (but now tiresome) theological and political experimentation, the subculture of much of Methodism remained blithely evangelical. Our hymnal, with its rich reservoir of Wesleyan hymns, deserves some thanks. Nonseminary-trained but credentialed local preachers also played a role.

Most dramatically, United Methodism's international membership can be credited. Unlike the other Mainline denominations, which are almost entirely based in the United States, one third of United Methodism's membership is now outside U.S. borders, primarily in Africa. When United Methodism's next governing General Conference convenes in 2012, as much as 40 percent of the delegates will be from other countries. By some estimates, there are more worshipers in United Methodist churches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on a typical Sunday than in the entire United States. United Methodism is also strong in Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Angola. The Africans are overwhelmingly conservative theologically and impatient with theological and sexual revisionists who have prevailed in other U.S.-based denominations.

Thanks to the Africans, who will likely represent a majority of United Methodism within 20 years or less, Methodists can anticipate a future more strongly moored to theological orthodoxy. But the African surge is relatively recent. More than 20 years ago, the church's international component was not a strong factor in its policies and governance. Who kept the Wesleyan flame burning during the dark 1960's and 70's, when evangelicals were an often disregarded minority, at least by church elites?

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The answer is mostly an evangelical caucus within United Methodism called Good News, based in Wilmore, Kentucky, and founded in 1967. For over 40 years it has fought for biblical Christianity within United Methodism, and within recent decades it has begun to see the blossoms of its spiritual fruit. As the most successful renewal movement among Mainline Protestantism, leaders from Good News have helped spawn other evangelical caucus groups and exponents of orthodoxy within the denomination: Bristol House, an evangelical publisher of books and Sunday-school curricula; the Foundation for Theological Education, a Ph.D. scholarship program for theologically orthodox students; The Confessing Movement, an advocacy group for theological accountability; Renew, an evangelical women's group; Lifewatch, a pro-life caucus; Transforming Congregations, the unofficial ministry for homosexuals struggling for chastity; the Mission Society for United Methodists, the unofficial missions agency for evangelical United Methodists (which now dispatches more full-time missionaries than the official, liberal-dominated church missions agency); and my own organization, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, which was founded in 1981 to combat Methodist and other church groups supporting Marxism under the aegis of liberation theology.

**UMC liberals, so accustomed to nearly uncontested power over many decades, are now exasperated at the bleakness of their demographic and political future. The church's most liberal regions in the West and Northeast have been the fastest declining, despite their theme of "open doors" and extravagant hospitality.**

Whence came Good News? Critics and friends often imagine it to be a creature of Southern conservative evangelicalism. But actually it traces back to Midwestern Methodism, whose evangelicals were often more combative and less institutional than Southern Methodists. Charles Keysor was a feisty pastor from Elgin, Illinois, who penned a column for a church magazine (*Christian Advocate*) in 1966 called "Methodism's Silent Minority: A Voice for Orthodoxy," which touted the church's continuing but largely unacknowledged evangelical subculture. Keysor had been inspired by the magazine's editor, James Wall, later editor of *Christian Century*, who suggested, "Why don't you write an article for us describing the central beliefs and convictions of this part of our church?"

Keysor asserted that Methodism's "silent minority" was unrepresented in the church's "higher councils," its concepts were "often abhorrent to Methodist officialdom," and its adherents were often derided as "fundamentalists." But more accurately, he wrote, "these brethren hold a traditional understanding of the Christian faith." The article elicited over 200 supportive letters and phone calls, leading to the creation of Good News in 1967, which focused largely on the magazine of the same name that Keysor would publish for 14 years. Its first issue drew praise from renowned Baptist theologian Carl F.H. Henry, then editor of *Christianity Today*, and evangelist Billy Graham.

Good News's first convocation was in 1970. It attracted over 1,600 United Methodists and featured as a speaker Methodist missionary to India and best-selling author E. Stanley Jones. Robustly polemical but carefully aiming its arrows, Good News in its early years challenged the absence of "biblical theology" in the church's Sunday-school materials, citing the avoidance of "salvation, any good news about the atonement of Jesus Christ, or any hint about the possibility of spiritual new birth." It began to publish alternative teaching materials, including a resource for confirmation. More sweepingly, Good News challenged the "theological pluralism" officially adopted by the denomination's General Conference in 1972. Thanks in part to Good News's tireless insistence that no church can long cohere around a celebration of disagreement, in 1988 the General Conference repudiated pluralism in favor of the "primacy of Scripture."

The 1972 General Conference, a high-water mark for United Methodist liberalism, was nonetheless the first church convention at which Good News actively lobbied for evangelical renewal. Besides the affirmation of "pluralism," the conference also ratified permissively pro-choice language on abortion, setting the stage for the UMC's support of *Roe* v. *Wade* a year later. However, that General Conference also ratified its first official disapproval of homosexual practice, which it declared "incompatible with Christian teaching." As in other Mainline Protestant denominations, homosexuality would become the chief issue dividing traditionalists from liberals for the next four decades.

Although initially dismissed by church elites, Good News's resistance to liberal hegemony at subsequent quadrennial General Conferences became increasingly formidable. With its populist approach and magazine publication, Good News rallied thousands of evangelical United Methodists to flood the General Conference with petitions urging biblical reforms. Good News sent observers to legislative committees and ultimately helped compel the publication of and easy access to all legislative proposals, which previously were kept in the hands of cagey legislative chairs. Before the General Conferences, Good News aided in establishing local evangelical renewal groups to help elect conservative delegates. In 1988 and 1992, Good News helped to rally pastors of large churches behind succinct orthodox theological statements that gained endorsement from hundreds of thousands of local United Methodists, and these agreements were then unveiled at the General Conference. Good News became the chief counterweight to the liberal church bureaucracy, whose hundreds of staffers had often dominated the convention.

Beyond political organizing at the General Conference



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and populist rabble-rousing through its bimonthly magazine, Good News successfully worked to bolster United Methodism's evangelical subculture. Thus, thousands of lay and clergy United Methodists who might have otherwise left the denomination chose to remain. Thousands of potential evangelical clergy, who otherwise would not have considered seeking ordination in United Methodism, have entered the church's ranks over the last 40 years. The church's 13 official seminaries in the United States, once all solidly modernist, now at least acknowledge evangelical strength in the church, and almost all have some orthodox faculty. At least two seminaries may have orthodox majorities. No less significantly, nearly one third of the church's seminarians now attend evangelical Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. Receiving almost no UMC funds, and having no official affiliation with the denomination, Asbury has become the church's most influential seminary. Located next door to evangelical Asbury College, with Good News's office just down the street, Wilmore has become the unofficial headquarters of evangelical United Methodists.

The founder of Good News did not live to see the United Methodist promised land. In 1980, Charles Keysor could see little progress in his church. The most recent General Conference had reaffirmed the traditional disapproval of homosexual practice, but it had not yet specifically prohibited the ordination of active homosexuals. In fact, a Good News proposal to do just that had been rejected. Keysor complained that Good News had only slowed the "rate of shift," but the shift was "still away from us." Keysor proposed that Good News redirect some of its energy toward ministry with United Methodists who had left the church rather than keep a seemingly dying denomination afloat. Good News's board disagreed, and Keysor resigned. He died of cancer shortly thereafter.

Keysor's successor was a young Ohio pastor named James Heidinger, who had chaired the Good News board. Although masterful and virtually tireless in championing theological orthodoxy, Keysor had been abrasive, as prophets outside the walls often are. Heidinger was equally uncompromising in doctrine but sunnier in disposition and successfully recruited seminary faculty and senior clergy to join the Good News cause. His generosity and lack of self-protective egotism facilitated Good News's role throughout the 1980's and 90's as patron of new organizations that would challenge the dominant liberal *Zeitgeist* on missions, seminary education, abortion, sexuality, and political witness. Building on the foundations of Keysor's leadership, Heidinger would successfully lead Good News for 28 years.

The 1988 General Conference was a turning point not only for its rejection of theological pluralism but for its approval of a new hymnal (still in the pews today) that is orthodox and free of "gender-neutral" language for God. Efforts to pull traditional hymns that were especially irksome to liberals, such as "Onward Christian Soldiers," were defeated. The liberal *Christian Century* editorialized that United Methodism's new doctrinal statement "strongly propounded the conservative view point" with its emphasis on the Bible. Heidinger himself wrote that the UMC had an "excellent new theological statement," whose "prominent theme ringing through it with bell-like clarity is the primacy of Scripture."

During the 1980's, Good News helped persuade the General Conference to adopt a slightly pro-life stance and to prohibit the ordination of active homosexuals or other persons sexually active outside marriage. In subsequent General Conferences, Good News helped lobby for specific prohibitions against same-sex relations. Any church funding for homosexual advocacy was also prohibited. Liberals raged at these prohibitions, contrasting their defeats with growing permissiveness toward homosexuality in the wider culture. At the 2000 General Conference, Good News helped elect a conservative majority on the denomination's top court, the Judicial Council. Over the next eight years, the Judicial Council rigorously enforced the church's prohibitions on homosexuality, culminating in the 2005 ruling to restore to his pulpit a Virginia pastor whose bishop had removed him for not granting immediate church membership to an active homosexual.

Heidinger retired from Good News in 2009, at perhaps the height of evangelical influence within United Methodism. Church liberals, frustrated by the evangelical/African majority in the church, had proposed creating a new, U.S.-only conference that would exclude conservative Africans from U.S. church issues. Although backed by the Council of Bishops, the proposal was overwhelmingly rejected in votes by local annual conferences. African conferences voted nearly unanimously against it. Another proposal to grant church membership automatically to all applicants was also defeated soundly.

UMC liberals, so accustomed to nearly uncontested power over many decades, are now exasperated at the bleakness of their demographic and political future. The church's most liberal regions in the West and Northeast have been the fastest declining, despite their theme of "open doors" and extravagant hospitality. Meanwhile, the relatively conservative Southeast region is holding its own, while African United Methodism continues to grow. Without Good News's steadfast church-renewal ministry of 40 years, the current evangelical/African ascendancy likely would never have been attained, as many if not most U.S. evangelicals would have long since abandoned the denomination.

Sadly, and thanks to residual theological liberalism, United Methodism has over the last 40 years lost three million members in the United States. But it has gained three million members in Africa, where the spirit of early Wesleyan revivalism is still strong. Thanks to Good News, that same spirit may yet recapture the U.S. church, ensuring for United Methodism a very different and brighter future than that awaiting the rest of ailing U.S. Mainline Protestantism. ◈



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# A Tale of Two Subversives

## Battling Christophobia in California and Serbia

### by Srdja Trifkovic

The intention of postmoderns to destroy real people, with their natural loyalties, traditional morality, and inherited cultural preferences, is the same everywhere. Its specific manifestations may be different in the United States and Serbia—the homes of our two interlocutors and my good friends—but the underlying motivation is identical. It is Christophobia, the incubator of countless secondary pathologies that are imposed and celebrated on both sides of the Atlantic under the label of diversity.

Having suffered countless disasters and progressive disintegration during the modern era, how may Christian civilization be effectively revived? "For true-blooded Western conservatives, this is the overarching question of their political life," says Greg Davis, as we savor boutique vodkas in downtown Santa Monica. "Conservatives are forever trying to get back to something better, sounder, nobler, truer. But how far back? A decade, a century—a millennium?"

I met Greg five years ago, while he was producing and directing the must-see documentary *Islam: What the West Needs to Know*. He is a soft-spoken convert to Orthodoxy, in his mid-30's, with a Ph.D. in political science from Stanford and an abiding sense that our civilization is collapsing. Western conservatives, he says, are hoping to save the key institution of the West—namely, Christianity—but Christianity did not originate in the West, and therein lies the crux of the matter: "The development of the West since 1054, in opposition to the Orthodox East, was a revolutionary act. The West, at its core, is revolutionary; hence the shouting of our conservatives for history to stop, while intermittently effective in slowing the slide, has proven vain. The West's defining act was the fundamental innovation of the *filioque*. The fruit of the schism was apparent in successive heresies and rebellions, which led to the wars of religion that would kill millions and tear Europe apart. Later subversives would translate the revolutionary logic into decidedly unchristian contexts such as the French and Bolshevik revolutions, with monstrous results."

While the unraveling of Western Christianity has been under way for a thousand years, it gained a new head of steam in our time. With Vatican II, Greg says, Roman traditionalists were dealt a tremendous blow, and they are still suffering its consequences. Meanwhile, "The more traditionally minded Protestant denominations are now sprinting toward Sodom, while the newer 'Bible churches,' holding the line somewhat more effectively on the moral front, show themselves very much of *this* world in their Dionysian revels featuring 'Christian' rock music and self-help philosophies about how to succeed in the world of mammon without really trying. The job of shoring up what remains of traditional Western Christianity is, needless to say, not getting any easier."

Orthodoxy, on the other hand, does not lend itself to the political realm, precisely because its kingdom is not of this world. It is impossible to turn Orthodoxy into a "movement" in the modern political sense, yet the Orthodox view on most political issues today largely tracks the views of traditional Roman Catholics and Protestants, in spite of their theological and ecclesiological differences: "Even in a decidedly Protestant and 'revolutionary' country such as the United States, the Orthodox easily recognize the practical wisdom embodied in a document such as the Constitution and its principle of limited government. They are more than anyone averse to the deification of political figures and of the state that has been the bane of the modern era. But they are by nature ill-adapted to navigating the turbulent waters of modern politics, which grow ever more frenzied and anti-Christian."

The Orthodox countries still outside the Western orbit have shown themselves routinely outclassed in the geopolitical great game to extend U.S.-style materialism and "democracy" to the far reaches of the galaxy. Davis points out how the Serbs have consistently underestimated the malevolence of U.S.-led designs on their country and culture, and how Russia naively undertook a series of Western-inspired "reforms" in the 1990's that devastated the country: "Now, however, Russia is pulling herself together. Vladimir Putin, regularly portrayed in Western media as a cross between Nicholas I and Darth Vader, refuses to let his people commit suicide along the lines of Western Europe, which continues to renew its vote of no confidence in itself. With the ancient enemy of both Western and Eastern Christianity, Islam, once again making inroads into both, Western conservatives should see Russia and Orthodox civilization generally as a natural ally. Yet prominent conservatives continue to support the U.S.-led prosecution of Russia. Their support for an ever-expanding

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NATO, for the missile shield, and for Western-sponsored color-coded revolutions is the support for a revolutionary power that recognizes no limit to its hegemony."

During the Cold War, it was still possible to regard the West, the adversary of revolutionary communism, as a net-conservative force in the world, but no longer. Western, and especially American, conservatives are now in the illogical position of defending the actions of the world's leading revolutionary power. For Western conservatives to remain "conservative," Davis concludes, they must be willing to support the cause of the few genuinely conservative forces left in the world—namely, those Orthodox nations still willing and able to resist indefinite Western cultural and geopolitical expansion.

Bosko Obradovic is a Serb of Greg Davis's age who is resisting both prongs of that expansion. He is one of the founders and leaders of *Dveri* (*The Doors*, *www.dveri-srpske.com*), a Belgrade-based NGO distinguished from most others by two key facts: It does not get a penny from George Soros, and in its many social and cultural endeavors it seeks the blessing of the Serbian Orthodox Church and spiritual guidance from its hierarchs. Bosko is a philosophy and literature graduate in his mid-30's, a teacher, librarian, and father of three. He was in the news recently for making a key contribution to the cancelation of the planned "gay-pride" parade in downtown Belgrade: "The organizers had everything lined up. The government of Serbia was supporting them because the ruling Democratic Party thought this was one way to show to Brussels that we are progressive enough for E.U. membership. All of the major media, all of the Western-funded NGOs, and countless fashionably enlightened public figures were on their side. This was supposed to be yet another proof of Serbia's terminal fall, its readiness to sell its soul for the elusive 'European integration.'"

In the end the parade was called off because of security concerns. Its organizers were offered another location, but they rejected it. This, Bosko says, indicates their real agenda: They did not merely want to march; they wanted to provoke. "Their goal had never been to protect anyone's 'human rights' or to protest 'discrimination.' Their goal was to promote a clearly defined ideology, lifestyle, and value system, and symbolically to impose it on Belgrade and on Serbia by taking over, however briefly, the old city center. Their objective was also to assert their political power as a privileged and protected group that promotes modernity. Their goal was to inflict a devastating blow on the traditional spiritual, moral, and cultural code, to present it as marginal, obsolete, and doomed to die out. Last but not least, calling the event off amidst a blaze of publicity was a call to their sponsors to continue and even increase their largesse, because the job is not done: Serbia is still its ugly, reactionary old self."

Bosko and his friends have been called some nasty names since the parade was canceled in mid-September. There have been calls for a ban on *Dveri*, supposedly for violating recently enacted "antidiscrimination" legislation, which was drafted completely in accordance with E.U. guidelines. He says attacks are "a compliment to all of us who are determined not to give up on the value system that has kept our people alive through the centuries." He is nevertheless concerned about the future: "We appear to be well on the way to 2084, when totalitarian NGO types will impose their blueprint for the eradication of our traditional spiritual, moral, and national identity. The NGO elite claims to act for and on behalf of 'the West' and enjoys the status of protected species, but no such protection will be extended to anyone if they have their way. Our "democracy" is heading for the abolition of the freedom to think differently from the high priests of Western postmodernity. Just look at the media treatment of Metropolitan Amfilohije, our acting Patriarch, for daring to quote the Scripture on sodomy! Is it not paradoxical? The Orthodox Church and all other mainstream religious communities in Serbia are asked to refrain from stating their position on this issue because doing so makes them liable to prosecution for advocating 'intolerance.'"

Bosko Obradovic sees the problem in clear-cut terms. Either the Church will speak Her mind clearly and without euphemistic evasiveness, or else She will lose the purpose of Her existence as the saving community based on faith and the teaching of two millennia: "The Church as a whole and individual Christians are expected to refrain from taking a position if it does not conform to the standards of acceptable discourse as proclaimed by those who are not Christians, or—to be more precise—who are determined anti-Christians. Of course, Metropolitan Amfilohije and other bishops did not have any choice: Rather than ignore the intended moral and cultural onslaught, they spoke out clearly and authoritatively. Their authority comes from the Scripture and the Fathers, not from our 'pro-E.U.' government, or the 'progressive' NGOs, or their foreign mentors. They also condemned all forms of hate and violence, in accordance with the Christian principles, but they, and we, cannot accept a self-isolation that can only end in criminalizing any open profession of our faith."

Bosko believes that the exclusion of the Orthodox Church from Serbia's social and cultural life remains the final goal of the parade's organizers and sponsors. He points out that the chorus of condemnation and indignant disgust against Metropolitan Amfilohije came simultaneously from the usual standard-bearers of "all progressive humanity"—Helsinki human-rights groups, sociology professors, foreign-sponsored "independent analysts," Soros-financed media outlets—and all had a common accusation: By daring to mention Sodom and Gomorrah, Metropolitan Amfilohije is "objectively" condoning violence and promoting discrimination. *Ergo* he is guilty of practicing violence and discrimination, of inspiring "far-right groups and all other extremists": "Their goal is to force the Church into internal exile, just like under communism. This goal is the *raison d'etre* of many NGOs in Serbia. They always react swiftly and indignantly when



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the Church adopts a position, treating it as something inherently illegitimate. The Metropolitan's scriptural reference threw them into rage, as witnessed by the media conglomerate B92, which has assumed the role of ideological prosecutors and star chamber. His reminder that 'the tree that bears no fruit is cut down' was twisted in the best tradition of the French Revolution and Bolshevism."

So what should be a believer's position on homosexuality—or, for that matter, on any number of postmodernity's sacred cows? Bosko Obradovic concludes that on this and every other social and political issue of our time, a distinct Christian position can and should be developed: "My faith does not allow it, and I do not want to mistreat, threaten, or discriminate against anyone. At the same time I am obliged to confess my faith, to bring up my children and to contribute to my society in accordance with what has been passed on to me—even if this means suffering legal punishment at the hands of the state."

That punishment is coming soon to America and Europe alike, and Christians like Greg Davis and Bosko Obradovic are ready for it. They know that the earthly and temporal powers of the state can and should be recognized as imperative only to the degree that they are used to support good and limit evil. In America and Serbia alike, they both agree, a Christian may obey state laws only if such obedience does not demand apostasy or sin. We do not know which of my two friends will be the first to endure martyrdom, but I fear that both will. ◈

## Green Water

*by Jack Butler*

Sometimes I think I've spent my life
swimming in green water:
It opens your breastbone to the cold
but warms your body later.

I faced a watersnake once. I've known
the ragged cypress stump
furred with green algae, and one of my own
friends took a neckbreaking jump

to murky shallows. I learned to breathe
in the Angelina River,
driving my visage again and again
to deeps of jade-silver

till my lungs learned when. When I swam after
dolphins in the Gulf,
the spray of their leaping was brighter than laughter
and made me want to laugh.



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# Government-Managed Business

## As Silent Cal Spins . . .

**by Stephen B. Presser**

"The business of America is business," said Calvin Coolidge, a few years before the Great Depression. In the worst economic downturn since then, Barack Obama won the White House after a campaign in which he made it clear, to what might be described as populist delight, that he was not a friend to corporations. In what was probably his most closely followed (and generally praised) speech, given in Philadelphia on March 18, 2008, he singled out one group for particular condemnation:

> Just as black anger often proved counterproductive, so have these white resentments distracted attention from the real culprits of the middle class squeeze—a corporate culture rife with inside dealing, questionable accounting practices, and short-term greed; a Washington dominated by lobbyists and special interests; economic policies that favor the few over the many.

Here was a view of business and corporations fit for pure demagoguery—the suggestion that the country's current financial woes are owing to trading on inside information, deceptive accounting, and the profit motive itself. This was made even clearer toward the end of that speech, as candidate Obama suggested what he thought all Americans ought to be discussing as they chose the next president:

> This time we want to talk about the shuttered mills that once provided a decent life for men and women of every race, and the homes for sale that once belonged to Americans from every religion, every region, every walk of life. This time we want to talk about the fact that the real problem is not that someone who doesn't look like you might take your job; it's that the corporation you work for will ship it overseas for nothing more than a profit.

Those who sought a profit, then, were the real miscreants responsible for the nation's ills—mortgages that could not be paid, mills that were shuttered, jobs that were lost. Those interested in profits were not interested in the general welfare; they were "the few" who were dominating the political scene, and it would be the job of an Obama administration to shift the government from favoring their interests to favoring those of "the many," which presumably meant the American people themselves. This idea is very much of a piece with Mr. Obama's unguarded comment to "Joe the Plumber" that "right now everybody's so pinched that business is bad for everybody, and I think when you spread the wealth around, it's good for everybody." Candidate Obama was running on a platform of redistribution, from the few to the many. From corporations and businessmen to the common man. What, then, to make of the fact that in its most recent economic moves the Obama administration is doing nothing less than seeking to take over at least some of the corporations themselves? Presumably the administration is not concerned with profits but with something else.

For example, the federal government now has a large stake in General Motors and Chrysler, but its chief goals appear to be to create the most jobs for members of the autoworkers union, which will also have a substantial ownership stake, and to manufacture vehicles that will be more fuel-efficient and environmentally friendly. These might be worthy goals, but they are not likely to produce the kind of cars that American consumers will be most willing to buy, and the long-term prospects for the success of these companies is not good.

In our legal tradition, a corporation's primary duty is to generate return for shareholders, and it is alien to that tradition to have our corporations conscripted to serve other goals. Admittedly, there are elements of our tradition that restrain the profit motive. Our law of competition, for example, has given the federal government the power to stop anticompetitive action on the part of corporations, and the Sherman Antitrust Act makes it criminal to enter into any agreement that restrains trade; thus, price fixing, pooling agreements, and other forms of controlling the market in goods, services, or commodities are subject to civil and criminal penalties. Generally speaking, however, it was the practice of the Bush administration not to be particularly zealous in pursuing prosecution of those who ran afoul of these laws, preferring to let the market itself discipline market players.

Not so the Obama administration, which has signaled that it will seek rigorously to enforce the antitrust laws, particularly against telecom companies and airlines. The

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airlines are just beginning to perform profitably after years of diminished revenues, and the telecom industry is one of the most efficient in terms of offering consumers multiple choices of providers and a myriad of products. Thus, the Obama administration seems to be driven by an ideology averse to business, or at least to the free market. Indeed, the *Wall Street Journal* has speculated that the Obama administration's rigorous antitrust policy will drive the airlines into bankruptcy, after which they will emerge as another government-run business.

What may be fueling this administration's actions is a simple belief that government can do a better job of running the economy and business than private entities can. This is not surprising when such establishment figures as Alan Greenspan have declared that the recent meltdown is a clear failure of capitalism, or when Judge Richard Posner can similarly conclude that he underestimated the manner in which individuals can perform reasonably in the market.

But what if it was government regulation (or interference) that caused the meltdown? No one seems to know for certain, and most on the left (and even some on the right) probably cling to the notion that it is impersonal markets or capitalism itself that failed us. Barack Obama has a stock villain. As he put it in his prepared remarks for a speech in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in October 2008, it was the "greed and irresponsibility" of "Wall Street executives" that "got us into this mess."

The recent collapse of financial institutions occurred, everyone seems to agree, when huge numbers of mortgages that had been granted to those who really could not afford them went into default. Those mortgages had been sliced and diced and repackaged and sold as derivatives until they represented several trillion dollars of investments. Purportedly, the value of those derivative financial instruments had been secured by credit-default swaps, which theoretically spread the risk of failure of the underlying mortgages. The scale of these mortgage failures was much greater than anyone anticipated, however, and the credit-default swaps simply proved inadequate.

Many of these vulnerable mortgages were written under pressure of the Clinton-era Community Reinvestment Act, which may have made it inevitable that lenders would go too far in allowing low-income borrowers to borrow beyond their means, at least if real-estate values failed to maintain their unprecedented upward trajectory. The unwise, politically inspired pressure to write vulnerable mortgages was coupled with federally mandated "mark to market" accounting, which required lenders to write down the value of their assets, and that combination triggered requirements of the securing of additional capital, which accelerated a credit crunch, and—*presto*!—the meltdown was on.

Today, many recognize that some of the key provisions of the Bush-era Sarbanes-Oxley Act (2002), including "mark to market" accounting, have been harmful, and the federal government has taken steps to reverse some of the act's worst elements. But Sarbanes-Oxley itself was an unwise knee-jerk reaction by those who believe that greed, chicanery, and financial shenanigans would disappear, if only the right piece of legislation were put in place. It has never been so, and it never will be; miscreants will inevitably seek to harm others, to take advantage of them, and the gullible will fall for their schemes. There is perfectly adequate state law and a perfectly adequate corpus of federal securities law to allow such wrongdoers to be prosecuted and their victims compensated, and additional measures such as Sarbanes-Oxley do nothing but raise the costs of doing business to everyone.

An economy runs on promises, on reliance, and on certainty, and, most of all, an economy runs pursuant to the rule of law in which commercial relationships among the parties are settled according to previous precedent and statutory directive. Businessmen understand this and order their lives accordingly. Coolidge got it, but most politicians do not. For them the most important thing is rewarding the constituency that keeps them in office, and the rule of law and settled expectations among businessmen is not a high priority. It certainly is not a high priority among Democrats, whose core constituencies are not small-business owners or the inventive entrepreneurs who keep the economy vital. Until recently, they were the mainstay of the Republicans, the heirs of Coolidge.

It is no surprise, then, that when Chrysler and GM emerged from bankruptcy, in a highly unorthodox and speedy series of procedures that ran afoul of the spirit if not the letter of the priorities established under bankruptcy law, the UAW ended up in a better position than the bondholders, the creditors of those companies. Orthodox bankruptcy law would have reversed that preference, but unions are a mighty force in the Democratic Party. Sensible creditors will now be even more cautious about lending to troubled industries, lest they be given short shrift in bankruptcy proceedings that are under the influence of politicians eager to protect party favorites.

Even before the Obama administration took power, we had something like socialism through the back door. Ownership in the great American corporations was dispersed to nearly all Americans through direct investment in shares of individual corporations and in mutual funds, union pension funds, and retirement plans, and indirect investment *vis-à-vis* attending endowed universities and participating in other institutions which invested. This arrangement brought our nation the greatest prosperity known to man, but it also brought economic dislocations and an unequal distribution of income. That is the price of capitalism and the private ownership of property. Those skeptical of the free market, those who cling to the idea that "spreading the wealth" can work in a way it never has before, are now in charge, and they seek to use the former engines of our prosperity to further their idealistic schemes.

That whirring noise is Silent Cal spinning in his grave. ◇



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*by Paul Craig Roberts*

# Privilege Displaces Equality

None of us growing up in Atlanta in the 1940's were under the delusion that we were equal. We were aware of a myriad of differences that had nothing to do with race or gender. Some were better football players. Others were better baseball players. Some could run faster. Others were more witty, or better fighters, or more attractive, or smarter, or more fun to be with.

Yet none of us had any illusions that special talent or physical attributes bestowed special rights. Neither the best quarterback, the best pitcher, the best fighter, nor the prettiest girl got to go to the head of the line.

The only person with special privileges was teacher's pet. And teacher's pet paid in spades for the privileges with the taunt, "teacher's pet, teacher's pet." Only a few prissy girls regarded the designation as a privilege. Most would break out in tears and rejoin the group by committing some act of insubordination.

Many of our teachers understood the trauma of being teacher's pet and were careful not to show any favoritism. However, I had a third-grade teacher who had a relative in the class whom she was determined to advance. The little girl was so ruthlessly taunted that she refused to come to school. My mother, who was active in the PTA, a powerful group at that time, came to the girl's rescue. My mother called a meeting of the PTA and got a policy adopted stating that teacher's pets were inconsistent with the U.S. Constitution's requirement of equality before the law, arguing that in the classroom the teacher was the law. In the aftermath of World War II, the Constitution was still a revered document, and my mother succeeded in abolishing teacher's pets at S.M. Inman Elementary School.

Today, taunting the teacher's pet would be a hate crime.

Privilege, based on race, gender, and handicapped status, was introduced into American society after I was an adult. I graduated from Georgia Tech three years before the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed. At Tech in those days the black students were from abroad. No privilege came with dark skin, or with gender. We had no women at Tech. It was an engineering and science school for white boys and foreign students.

The women were at girls' schools, like Agnes Scott. Blacks were at Morehouse and Spelman and the colleges that made up Atlanta University. There were no mixed dorms at Tech, and smuggling in a girlfriend was a high-risk venture.

The foreign students were as smart as my classmates but more aware of world events. I became friends with many. We had trouble getting the dark-skinned ones into movie theaters. However, they were saved by the segregation of the day. A Tech ID proved that they were not black.

All of this changed when EEOC bureaucrat Alfred Blumrosen got hold of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and stood it on its head. The act defined discrimination as an intentional action. But Blumrosen, banking on the inclination of the federal judiciary to defer to agency interpretation, succeeded in redefining discrimination to be "disparate impact." Thus, discrimination became the absence of proportional representation of "favored minorities."

That was the end of equality under the law. Bureaucrats took an act of Congress, which intended to create a statute in support of the 14th Amendment, and created privilege based on skin color. Blacks went to the head of the line.

Feminists made sure that women soon joined the ranks of the legally privileged, as did advocates for the handicapped. Today homosexuals are pushing to join the privileged.

I have been in many airport parking lots where there are scores of unused spaces reserved for the handicapped. I have missed flights from having to resort to satellite parking so that handicapped privileges may sit there unused. Many a time all of us have arrived at shopping centers in the rain to find that all close-in parking is reserved for the handicapped. Whoever allots these spaces vastly overestimates the percentage of handicapped who frequent airports and shopping centers.

What the signs—$500 fine—tell us is that we are second-class citizens. Because we are not handicapped, we cannot park in an available space, which has to be reserved in the event that hordes of handicapped motorists arrive. Young people learn the same lesson when they apply to graduate schools and for jobs. Preferences trump abilities.

Not content with destroying equality under the law, the partisans of privilege are now destroying the First Amendment. The ADL succeeded in attaching the Hate Crimes Act to the military-appropriation bill, which passed the House. The purpose is to prevent any criticism of Israel. The syllogism is as follows: Antisemitism is a hate crime. Criticism of Israel is antisemitic. Thus, criticism of Israel is a hate crime.

Thus a country that (according to the Goldstone Report) commits war crimes is immune from criticism. Indeed, under the hate-crime law the revered Jewish jurist and author of the report is open to being arrested as a hate-crime offender.

The U.S. Constitution has fallen. It is, as President George W. Bush contemptuously declared, "a mere scrap of paper." Makes me wonder how long before the best fighter stands at the head of the line. ◁©▷



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*by Taki Theodoracopulos*

# The Limits of Compassion

Something's bothering me about the Polanski business. No, unlike Harvey Weinstein and Bernard-Henri Lévy—not to mention that Mitterand pedophile—I will not defend Roman's actions with a 13-year-old, but I will say that with friends like his making fools of themselves defending him, it will be a miracle if he gets off with a slap on the wrist. Although this may sound pompous, I doubt that any of Polanski's defenders have known him as long as I have—40 years and counting—but let's take it from the top.

Hollywood has a lot to answer for, and mixing up global warming, Darfur, HIV, and Roman's case is not exactly kosher. I particularly liked what one English writer, Hugo Rifkind, wrote in *The Spectator* about Mel Gibson, who was "nearly hounded out of town for a drunken anti-Semitic outburst, one for which he has apologized more times than Taki has had hangovers. But Polanski shags an actual child and they love him." Ironically, the four people who failed to sign the petition for Roman were Woody Allen, Robert Blake, O.J. Simpson, and Phil Spector, the last two being in the pokey as I write.

Yes, there are a lot of jokes about Polanski making the rounds, but in the meantime he is having a very bad time in a Swiss jail. Psychologically, that is. Let's face it. It does smell a bit of Inspector Javert, 32 years on. I first met Roman when he walked into my bedroom in Gstaad uninvited and insisted on watching me punch and kick a tiny piece of paper hanging from a string. (The purpose of the exercise was to speed up my kicks and punches for an upcoming karate tournament.) We began hanging out together after that, and he even flew Bruce Lee over, and I trained with him. Yes, we did have a falling out after the events in Los Angeles, and I did write some mean things about him, but we have made up, and only he knows the price he has paid for that one moment—or hour—of madness. Roman now has children, is happily married, and as his good friend, the wonderful playwright Ronnie Harwood, has said to me, no child, especially one as talented and as delightful as his boy Elvis, deserves this.

I will not try the line that phonies like Bernard-Henri Lévy have used, that artists are above the law and that back then 13 was the new 18. Or the grotesque Whoopi Goldberg's quip that it wasn't "*rape* rape." The one defense I will try is this: What in Heaven's name has happened to compassion? Polanski has been on the run for 32 years, has never come close to repeating his crime, and has rehabilitated himself in spades. What kind of society are we that in order to further the political career of an obscure California district attorney we use the full power of two states to punish a man who was born punished? First by the Nazis, and then by the Manson gang. No wonder poor Roman feels hard done by.

And speaking of forgiveness, I don't remember Menachem Begin, a ferocious terrorist, ever apologizing for murdering 91 people, 28 of them British, when he blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. He didn't even apologize for that while receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, yet the world forgave and forgot once Israel became a big-time player, thanks to Uncle Sam. The cold-blooded IRA murderer Magee is received by those whose parents and families he killed when he blew up the Grand Hotel in Brighton 25 years ago, and he certainly hasn't apologized. The only one who got it right on this was, of course, the magnificent Norman Tebbit, whose wife, the brave Margaret, is living proof that those Irish animals should rot in jail instead of hanging out with polite society. I don't remember the egregious Ted Kennedy asking for Sirhan Sirhan to be set free after 41 years in a very tough jail, so where's Catholic and Irish compassion where the Palestinian is concerned?

The world is just one big double standard, so before anyone accuses me of defending child molestation, what about Jeffrey Epstein, a man who was tried and convicted of having had sex with numerous underage girls, but who only served 12 months of a ridiculously soft 18-month sentence? Epstein had the following going for him: He is a billionaire, despite the fact that no one knows how he made his pile, as he trained and worked as a math researcher. He also had letters recommending his character to the judge in Palm Beach by Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico and Bill Clinton, whom Epstein flew all over the world in his private plane and who is a close friend of his.

So, a crime committed 32 years ago and paid for in full as far as I'm concerned by a man who has known more suffering than most of us is to be pursued to the bitter end, whereas Jeffrey Epstein, friend of the powerful and a billionaire, does only 12 months in a country-club jail in Palm Beach. If that's true justice, then the law is an ass, but I always knew that. Why don't we try compassion and forgiveness for a change—but not for truly bad guys, just for poor Roman Polanski. ◇



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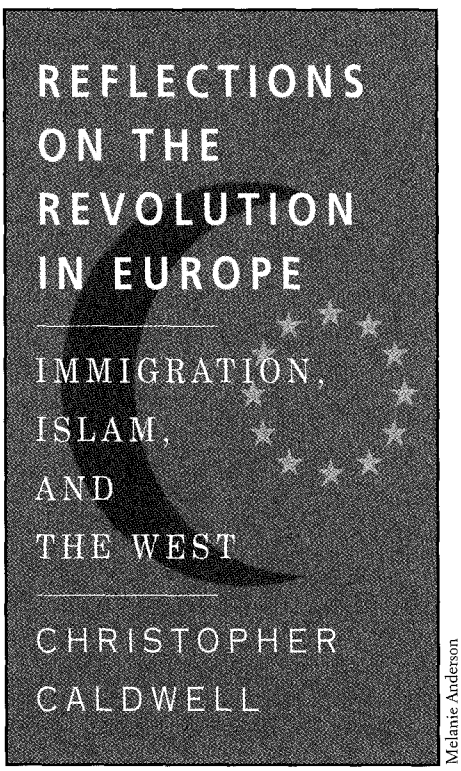
# Waiting for Charles the Second

**by Matthew A. Roberts**

*"How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—*
*With those who shaped him to the thing he is—*
*When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,*
*After the silence of the centuries?"*
—Edwin Markham, "The Man With the Hoe," 1899

**Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West**
*by Christopher Caldwell*
*New York: Doubleday;*
*432 pp., $30.00*



Melanie Anderson

"A state cannot be constituted from any chance body of persons, or in any chance period of time," wrote Aristotle. "Most of the states which have admitted persons of another stock, either at the time of their foundation or later, have been troubled by sedition." Where Aristotle writes "sedition," we might today think of dissent or even a type of revolution. Taking cues from Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Christopher Caldwell, senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, has penned *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, outlining a subtler form of revolution: Third World immigration and its effects on Europe. Caldwell asks, "Can we have the same Europe with a different people?" His answer: a resounding "no."

Unlike the rapid events of Burke's age, this revolution crept along slowly in its execution. "It took fifty years of mass immigration for Europeans to grow frightened of their minorities," Caldwell maintains, until they have started "doing out of fear what they previously did out of conviction or generosity." And people have, indeed, become fearful—not to mention angry. According to a recent poll, only 19 percent of Europeans think that immigration has been good for their countries. Europeans are witnessing a demographic transformation before their very eyes. People from Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia have carved enclaves for themselves throughout Europe. Many neighborhoods are unrecognizable to their indigenous inhabitants. As J. Enoch Powell once remarked, this is not really immigration, but colonization.

How did Europe get to this point? Why did Europeans allow the transformation to happen? Had average Europeans been consulted on this issue and told its consequences beforehand, they would never have consented to mass immigration. From the beginning, European elites drove this wagon, and Caldwell, although lacking Jean Raspail's nuanced portrayal of European elites, adeptly outlines their shortsighted and often confused immigration policies, starting with guest-worker programs.

Business and political leaders invited immigrants to work in factories after World War II. But, Caldwell maintains, they exaggerated their need for immigrants. Europe's factories soon went into decline, and the subsequent labor surplus resulted in unemployment and lower wages. Their next rationale was that their countries lacked a sufficient labor pool to prop up the welfare state. But, Caldwell notes, this reasoning is flawed. Immigrants take more out of the welfare system than they put in. And why would immigrants want to contribute to a welfare system without recouping their contributions? It's a vicious cycle. As the

*Matthew A. Roberts writes from Kansas City, Missouri.*



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German politician Jürgen Rüttgers quipped, Germany needs "*Kinder statt Inder*" ("more children, not Indians"). Furthermore, it is uncertain whether such multiethnic societies can maintain welfare states. Caldwell observes that welfare economies tend to arise only on "conditions of ethnic homogeneity." The more diverse a society becomes, the more cracks form in the welfare state. Citing various studies, Caldwell asserts that much of Americans' antipathy toward European socialism results from the ethnic diversity of the United States. Such antipathy will likely arise in multiethnic European countries as well. More recently, elites have justified immigration as a penance for their countries' history of colonization or by citing the alleged benefits of diversity. But these justifications keep changing—"now growth, now welfare, now the benefit to the host society, now the benefit to the immigrants themselves." As Caldwell observes, "immigration is a fait accompli for which people are scrambling to find a rationale."

Yet the revolution may have a deeper explanation. Enlightenment universalism, imbuing Europeans with a false sense of security while disarming them in the name of human rights, has undermined the confidence and patriotism required to confront such threats. Furthermore, weighed down by guilt regarding the holocaust, many Europeans (Caldwell observes) lack a sense of self-preservation. European governments, looking to make amends for past wrongs, were preoccupied with keeping under surveillance "a collection of aging 'fascist' buffoons," while the Third World slowly colonized their cities. Multiculturalism, in effect, has become "a self-directed xenophobia."

In recent years, the European Union has only exacerbated the problem. Caldwell argues that the European Union stripped national governments of two important duties: defending their borders and preserving their cultures. The Schengen Agreements, by abolishing border checks among most Western European countries, allow a country that is lax on immigration (most notably Spain) to set the immigration policy for the rest of Europe. Immigrants sneak into Spain, set up residence there, and then move on to a more desirable country. As for culture, the European Union has legitimized a false European identity. Those immigrants who do not wish to be Bavarian, Flemish, or Welsh can nevertheless exploit the benefits of becoming a "legal," as distinguished from a "real," European. As Masoud Kamali explained, "You are not going to be a Swede . . . but perhaps you can choose to be a European." It is telling that while the popularity of the European Union has fallen among the indigenous populations, polls show that around 85 percent of immigrants view it favorably.

The greatest threat from immigrants, however, is Islam. Hardly any Western European country remains unscathed by Islamic-terrorist attacks—despite the fact that nearly all Western leaders proclaim Islam a "religion of peace." Although elites first dismissed these attacks as stemming from poverty or lack of assimilation, they have been proved wrong. Many of the terrorist leaders, Caldwell asserts, are well off and college educated, and second-generation Muslim immigrants are more anti-Western than the first generation, and the third generation more so than the second. They may want a European standard of living, but they increasingly prefer the anti-Western tenets of Islam. Omar Bakri told the London daily *Al-Hayat*, "Allah willing, we will transform the West into Dar Al-Islam by means of invasion from without. If an Islamic state arises and invades, we will be its army and soldiers from within." Another Muslim recently carried a sign in Westminster reading, "Europe, You'll Come Crawling When Mujahideen Come Roaring."

While Islam may possess hard-wired hostility toward non-Muslims, for many jihadists it may also serve as an anti-Western anchor of identity. After spending time with hardened jihadists, Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani journalist, discovered that many of them were not inspired by Islamic ideology, but by their desire "to see the world, handle weapons, and have a youthful adventure." During the French riots of 2005, Caldwell reports, many of the rioters were wearing expensive basketball shoes and sideways New York Yankees caps, and flashed the cameras with gestures learned from rap videos. After months of investigation, French authorities still could not come to agreement on what the riots were "about." Furthermore, unlike certain traditional religions rooted in a particular place, Islam has become a global phenomenon linking disparate people together *via* satellite television and the internet. Part of its appeal to Third World immigrants may well be its anti-Western ideological slant.

The societal costs of this demographic transformation have been immense: the replacement of Homer and Shakespeare by Arabic calligraphy and kente cloth; the supplanting of Christian symbols by Muslim ones; censorship and the loss of liberties for Europeans; rampant crime; rape gangs; terrorist attacks; riots; the costs of healthcare, education, and housing expenses incurred by immigrants; neighborhoods overrun by minorities; the violence that means Europeans can no longer travel safely in their own cities; and many of the other problems that arise in multiethnic societies. Such problems further empower the managerial elite in managing ethnic tensions, often to the disadvantage of the indigenous populations.

"Race, as a category of experience, has returned with a vengeance" to Europe, Caldwell affirms. "Some kind of ethnic conflict simmers in every country where there has been mass immigration." And governmental and nongovernmental agencies, lobbied by immigrant groups, have been all too eager to censor any speech deemed "racist"—so much so that now many Europeans are afraid to vocalize their discontent. Taking this "antiracism" to the next level in France, President Nicholas Sarkozy has implemented an American-style affirmative-action program, despite its unpopularity among his voting base. Critical of



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Sarkozy's shortsightedness, Caldwell laments that

> one moves swiftly and imperceptibly from a world in which affirmative action can't be ended because its beneficiaries are too weak to a world in which it can't be ended because its beneficiaries are too strong.

Still consumed by the post-World War II obsession with eliminating "European racism" at any cost, European elites carry on a quisling crusade that only emboldens anti-Western sentiment. The French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut commented that "this anti-racism will be for the twenty-first century what communism was for the twentieth century: a source of violence."

Although Caldwell is correct on most points, his book is not without its shortcomings. He sometimes finds it necessary to engage in gratuitous political correctness, taking jabs at right-wing parties in Europe as well as at Enoch Powell; this perhaps can be ascribed to a desire to ingratiate himself with his masters and benefactors. And though Caldwell is candid on the subject of immigration to Europe, he often contrasts this phenomenon with immigration to the United States by repeatedly underestimating the problems that arise through immigration from Mexico and other Central and South American countries. He fails to appreciate that most of these immigrants' traditions are only *in part* Western. Caldwell at times stops just short of assuming a false choice between Israel and the Muslim immigrants in Europe. He excludes the third option, that of denouncing Muslim hostilities toward Jews in Europe and opposing Muslim immigration to Europe, while simultaneously remaining neutral in Middle Eastern politics. The threat of terrorism is primarily an immigration—not a foreign-policy—issue, and any Western patriot should be more concerned with who controls the neighborhoods around Paris or London than who controls the West Bank.

Finally, Caldwell is too pessimistic about the future prospects of Europe. Oddly, he hints that the Americanization of the Continent might prove helpful, having argued that this very Americanization is part of the problem. Although he takes note of recent victories by anti-immigration parties throughout Europe and the turning of indigenous sentiment against immigration, he fails to see that Europe may in fact be in a stronger position concerning immigration than is the United States. Despite the massive waves of immigrants, European countries remain overwhelmingly more homogenous, demographically speaking, than the United States. Unlike most Americans, Europeans typically feel strong attachments to blood and soil, attachments that may actually be growing stronger. And in the 11th hour, Europeans may just be willing to make the necessary sacrifices and fight for their birthright. Perhaps, even now, the next Charles Martel is being born. ©


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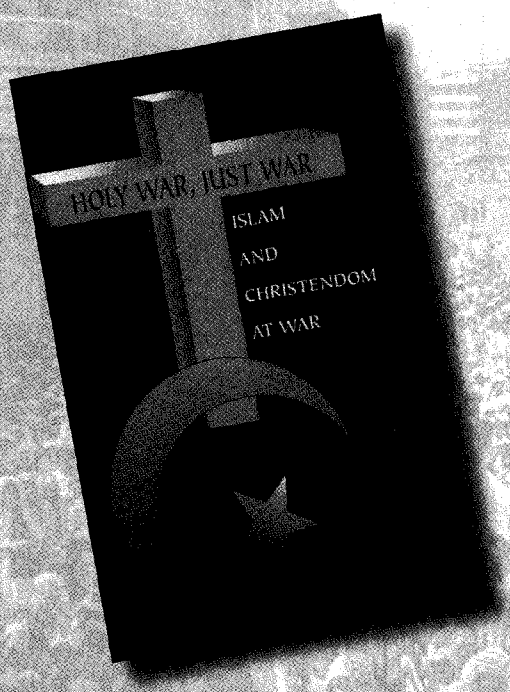


Holy War, Just War

Islam and Christendom at War

by Roberto de Mattei

*"The term 'clash of civilizations' is not a palatable one in political and media circles," writes Roberto de Mattei, but it is the only proper framework for understanding how the fundamental theological differences between Christianity and Islam inform the way their adherents wage war. In this important work, he explains these differences with careful scholarship and defends with eloquence the "lawfulness of war against an enemy who is attacking the West, with the aim of establishing a moral and social order that is radically opposed to our history and tradition."*

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# *Ubuntu!*

**by W. James Antle III**

**Mortal Follies: Episcopalians and the Crisis of Mainline Christianity**
*by William Murchison*
*New York: Encounter Books;*
*300 pp., $25.95*

William Murchison gets right to the point in his eloquent account of mainline Protestantism's near-terminal degeneration, written poignantly from an Anglican's perspective:

> Whenever traditional Christianity clashed with late-twentieth-century culture, the Episcopal Church normally weighed in on the side of the culture: for enhanced choice in life, for more laxity and less permanence in belief.

Don't take Murchison's word for it: Listen to those responsible for the dwindling Episcopalian flock. Episcopal Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, the first woman to be elected as primate in the worldwide Anglican Communion, is not done being an agent of change. She recently told delegates to her church's triennial convention that the notion "that we can be saved as individuals, that any of us alone can be in right relationship with God" is the "great Western heresy."

That's why Jefferts Schori said she had chosen "Ubuntu"—which is supposed to be an African word for sharing and caring—as the theme for the Episcopalian meeting. "Ubuntu doesn't have any 'I's in it," she noted in her Opening Address to the convention.

> The "I" only emerges as we connect—and that is really what the word means: I am because we are, and I can only become a whole person in relationship with others. There is no "I" without "you," and in our context, you and I are known only as we reflect the image of the One who created us.

Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, another charming lady who happens to be the dean of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has identified one apparent exception to *Ubuntu*: the "blessing" of abortion, whereby a woman can become a whole person by terminating her relationship with the "other" in her womb—even if it is a purely elective abortion undergone by a woman who "becomes pregnant within a loving, supportive, respectful relationship" and "has every option open to her," but nevertheless "decides she does not wish to bear a child."

After all, says Ragsdale, "The ability to enjoy God's good gift of sexuality without compromising one's education, life's work, or ability to put to use God's gifts and call is simply blessing." Perhaps fearing she might be misunderstood, Ragsdale continued, "These are the two things I want you, please, to remember—abortion is a blessing and our work is not done." She then repeated the second part of the sentence three times to make sure no one missed out on the gospel according to St. Margaret Sanger.

It is this kind of nonsense that prompted Murchison to write *Mortal Follies: Episcopalians and the Decline of Mainline Christianity*. It's also what has the Episcopal Church and the larger Anglican Communion on the brink of schism, pitting believers in Jefferts Schori's "great Western heresy" against culture-conforming progressives who celebrate the blessings of abortion, homosexuality, and feminism.

Murchison, a syndicated columnist, *Chronicles* corresponding editor, and happy warrior, proceeds from the Church of England's somewhat problematic beginning under Henry VIII to the evolution of an American Episcopal Church that "oozed with specialness." He concedes that there were problems from the beginning—"In the Episcopal Church no book could be presumed closed"—but praises the denomination's "beguiling blend of all that was best in Christianity."

In that blend, Murchison includes "orthodox doctrine; sacramental devotion balanced by devotion to Scripture; intellectual attainment; scholarship; architectural richness; liturgical know-how; good manners; good taste." All of these characteristics can still be found in American Christianity, even American Protestantism, today. But good luck finding them all in one place.

Now for the part that will really have the Episcopal Church's presiding bishop hunting for heretics. Murchison traces his denomination's destructive shift to the civil-rights movement of the 1960's, which is to modern American liberalism roughly what the Resurrection is to orthodox Christianity: a kind of final victory over sin and death. Murchison is obviously in sympathy with Christian calls for racial harmony and the decent treatment of black people. But it was in the midst of his church's civil-rights activism, he argues, that Episcopal elites acquired less benevolent habits: liberal guilt, radical egalitarianism, the desire for more crusades to liberate the oppressed (however defined), and the conviction that the moral sensibilities of Episcopal elites were superior to those found in Scripture or tradition.

First came the emancipation of women. "When the Episcopal Church came to consider the place and role of Episcopal women, it recalled that certain 'old' attitudes about blacks, supposedly 'approved' by Scripture, had turned out to be wrong-headed," Murchison writes. "What about women? Wasn't it possible—likely even—that all this time parchment prescription had blinded everyone, most women included, to the truth and justice of womanhood's claims to fulfillment?"

In due time, women were to be ordained as priests and bishops. Episcopalians became active in support of legal abortion, since abortion was viewed as an extension of women's rights rather than having to do with any "rights" of the unborn. The cultural revolution continues to this day,



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when Episcopalians enjoy the spiritual leadership and theological reflections of Katharine Jefferts Schori and Katherine Hancock Ragsdale.

Then came homosexual liberation, which in Murchison's telling "followed ineluctably for the church" from the previous step. Every liberal social cause was to be shoehorned into the civil-rights template, no matter how square the peg or round the hole. "It is as though this great Christian body," Murchison continues, "admiring the culture's vivacity, had deliberately sat down alongside the exemplars of that culture, hoping to draw from them warmth and comfort."

Yet it was the embrace of "gay rights" that provoked the conservative reaction within the Episcopal Church, riling even those who were generally unbothered by the ordination of women or the vulgarization of the Book of Common Prayer. The baptism of homosexuality was an issue that united Anglo-Catholics and low-church evangelicals, American traditionalists and their Anglican brethren overseas, white Southerners and black Africans. For many Episcopalians—even for entire congregations—it was a bridge too far.

But the Episcopal leadership was undeterred, consecrating the open homosexual V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire as bishop in 2003. Conservative Episcopalians who had long resisted converting to Catholicism or joining evangelical churches disaffiliated and formed the Convocation of Anglicans in North America, with the support of Archbishop Peter Akinola of the Church of Nigeria.

Murchison points out the Episcopal Church's problems are symbolic of a larger crisis within mainline Protestantism, but it may even be further gone than most. A recent survey of Episcopal clergy found that 72 percent favored the ordination of homosexuals, 77 percent oppose church teachings against homosexuality, and 87 percent favor homosexual lay leaders. Only clergy in the United Church of Christ—conservative Christians often joke that its acronym "UCC" really stands for "Unitarians Considering Christ"—reported more liberal attitudes on this subject.

*Mortal Follies* ends with a prayerful call for Episcopal faithfulness to Christian tradition. It is a bitter irony that Africans may need to send missionaries to convert American Episcopalians, Methodists, and other mainline Protestants to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When the African missionaries arrive, Katharine Jefferts Schori will no doubt endeavor to remind them that there is no *I* in *Ubuntu*.

*W. James Antle III is associate editor of* The American Spectator.

# A Voice From the Mass Grave

**Andrei Navrozov**

**The Triumph of Provocation**
*by Józef Mackiewicz*
*New Haven: Yale University Press;*
*256 pp., $48.00*

This difficult book has a long history. *Zwyciestvo prowokacji* was originally published by its Polish author, then a penniless exile in Munich, at his own expense in 1962. I first read the work in Russian translation some 20 years ago, thanks to the editorial heroism of Nina Karsov, who had brought out a Russian edition in London under the imprint of one of her émigré publishing houses. And, in more recent years, I was a witness to Karsov's struggle with the Anglo-American publishing establishment, aimed at persuading a mainstream house to bring out the English translation of a book whose thesis was deeply unfashionable and whose commercial potential was at best unknown. Truth to tell, I still can't believe she's succeeded.

As I say, it's a difficult book. Difficult, first, because its author says many things that have never been said before and, second, because some of these things concern places of which today's Western readers are not expected to know much—places like Poland, Lithuania, and the Ukraine. Such historical data as the author takes for granted are not always in their grasp, with the consequence that what to him is an explosive paradox may easily be construed by them as a routine assertion.

Hence my plea to the English reader to buy a copy of the book, if only to put it on the bookshelf, next to Kant's *Prolegomena* or fragments of Sappho, whence it will radiate wisdom and humanity. For I suspect it is sheer folly to count on his abiding interest in an "anti-Communist manifesto," as this work has been called by an Hungarian reviewer, after every newspaper, magazine, and radio station from here to Timbuktu has told him that communism is dead. That the book "destroys Communist myths which survive the fall of Communism," as another Hungarian has written, may be a sweetener, but not enough of one to shift copies in this day and age.

So I ought to appeal to the English reader on other grounds. I ought to say to him that, apart from music and the sea, the most beautiful sound in the universe is that of an intelligent man speaking, and Józef Mackiewicz is one of the most intelligent men we ever heard. This alone ought to put *The Triumph of Provocation* on a par with Gibbon and Burke, Gobineau and Tocqueville. It may be hackneyed and presumptuous to call an obscure book a work of genius, but that is what this is.

Józef Mackiewicz (1902-85) was born in St. Petersburg to a Polish nobleman who had set up a wine-importing business in the imperial capital. Five years later the family moved to Vilnius, where the child attended a classical gymnasium until, in 1919, he joined the fight against the Bolsheviks in the Russian civil war, a war of attrition in which Poland was to play such an important and equivocal part. In July 1920, Mackiewicz's regiment covered the retreat of the Polish army from Vilnius, which had fallen to the Reds, and the young man found himself in Warsaw, where he enrolled at the univer-



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sity to study biology. His first literary work appeared in 1922, and from that point on he made a living as a writer and a jobbing journalist.

In September 1939, when the Soviet army invaded eastern Poland, Mackiewicz fled to Lithuania, which, less than a year later, was again occupied by Soviet troops. In poverty and in hiding, unable to write and publish, he worked as a woodcutter and a carter. In July 1941, after the Germans had come, he received and refused an offer from the occupation authorities to edit a newspaper in Polish. Nonetheless, as he later wrote,

> I do not agree that the Germans are the worst enemy. The Bolsheviks are worse, because they are more dangerous to any nation, [as] no Pole can simultaneously be a German, [but] every Pole can simultaneously be a Communist.

In 1943 the occupation of Lithuania became the subject of a book entitled *The Truth Does Not Hurt*, not published until 2002, and another, written after he had made his way back to Poland, entitled *Optimism Won't Substitute for Poland*, not published until 2005. There, after a journey to the Katyn Forest, where he witnessed the exhumation of the bodies of Polish officers murdered by the Russians, Mackiewicz's historical worldview began to form:

> There is no analogy between the German occupation of the years 1939-45 and the 1939-41 Soviet occupation. There is no analogy between the German method and the Soviet. Against the Germans, there was a war. A terrible war, but a war. In this war, rightly or wrongly, the whole of Poland took part, and she had to draw conclusions from those barbarous conditions which Hitler had imposed upon her, and which he did not conceal, but plastered on every street corner and every entrance: murder, destruction, prison, camps.

In 1945, fleeing from the Soviet liberators advancing on Poland, the historian reached Rome. Crucially for his later survival in the public eye, an arbitration board of the Association of Polish Journalists cleared Mackiewicz of all charges of collaboration with the Nazis. Whereupon, writes Karsov,

> Mackiewicz, commissioned by the Research Section of the Second Polish Corps under the command of General Władisław Anders, prepared a white book about the Katyn crime, first published in 1948 as *Zbrodnia katynska w swietle dokumentyw* [The Katyn Crime in the Light of Documents].

The book, the first ever on the politically divisive subject of Soviet war crimes attributed to the Germans, came out in English in 1951 as *The Katyn Wood Murders*. In 1952 the U.S. Congress Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre heard Józef Mackiewicz in the dual capacity of witness and expert. In 1957, *Katyn* was followed by *Contra*, the first ever investigation of the Allied handover to Stalin, foreshadowed at Yalta, of ethnically Russian combatants who had fought on the German side. In 1962 came *The Triumph of Provocation*.

It is clear that at this stage in his life Mackiewicz has accumulated both the experience and the information necessary to conceive this seminal work. Its subject is not so much the history of totalitarianism in the 20th century as the emotional and political reaction of Western democracies—whose denizens he follows Lenin in describing as "deaf and dumb blind men"—to its mercurial essence and uncontrollable spread.

Of special interest to the modern reader is Mackiewicz's treatment of the West's response to the second Soviet *perestroika* under Khrushchev—the first such maneuver was the anti-Bolshevik about-turn of the early 1930's, when the term itself was launched by Stalin—which was almost identical to its response to the third round of reforms, under Gorbachev, a quarter of a century ago. Of Khrushchev, personally responsible for the extermination of the kulaks in the Ukraine in the 1930's, he writes,

> Why should the murder of people because they are Jews be worse than the murder of people only because they have achieved a certain social status or because they believe in other ideals? At the same time that Eichmann was kidnapped and hanged, in violation of laws obtaining throughout the civilized world, in full view of the world community, and without a word of protest from any organization for the "defense of human rights," Khrushchev, in full view of the same civilized world, was decorated with wreaths like a sacred cow in India, spent a night in France in a former king's bed, and his peace of mind was regarded as so important that some of the émigrés whom he had not managed to kill were deported to an island to ensure that they would not spoil his appetite by

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arranging a demonstration.

Khrushchev's reforms were tied to "de-Stalinization," Stalin's to "de-Internationalization," and Gorbachev's to "de-Communization," but the nearly uniform assessment of all these political changes of tack on the part of Western observers was characterized by what Mackiewicz, a biologist by training, painstakingly anatomizes as wishful thinking. Totalitarianism's essence remained, and its health was all the more robust for the mutations.

"Provocation," in this all-embracing Mackiewicz sense, is a maneuver—political as well as cultural—that totalitarianisms devise and execute in order to provoke a wishful-thinking response from the democracies they use as parasites use their hosts. He quotes the following passage from Lenin, which had only come to light in 1961:

> Telling the truth is a bourgeois superstition. . . . While chasing profits in the Soviet market, the world's capitalists will close their eyes to reality and thus change into deaf and dumb blind men. They will . . . rebuild the war industry we need for our future victorious attacks on our suppliers. In other words, they will be working toward their own suicide.

Times change, and tanks and missiles of "the war industry" from Lenin to Khrushchev have given way to cybernetic engineering and nanotechnology research, but I do not think that the Mackiewicz sense of "provocation" has changed very much since the Soviet secret-police apparatus of the 1920's launched its "Operation Trust" to persuade the West that the gang of Bolshevik regicides in the Kremlin had evolved into a responsible government with democratic aims.

In short, to Western readers *The Triumph of Provocation* should prove not only difficult but disturbing. It is a mirror, worthy of Voltaire, that reflects their own blindness, and that of their fathers and grandfathers, who, in the teeth of all available evidence to the contrary, "believed"—no less fervently than did their counterparts in Russia and Eastern Europe under Soviet rule!—that everything that happens is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. For where, under the pain of death from torture, my compatriots "believed" Stalin, as later under the pain of hunger they "believed" Khrushchev and under the pain of social ostracism they "believed" Gorbachev, their Western counterparts "believed" these same creatures of totalitarianism merely out of the Panglossian compulsion to "believe" that all is well with the universe founded on human reason.

On second thought, please forget everything I've said. Forget that this book is likely to be difficult. Forget that it is certain to be disturbing. Just buy a copy, and hear Józef Mackiewicz speak.

*Andrei Navrozov is* Chronicles' *European editor.*


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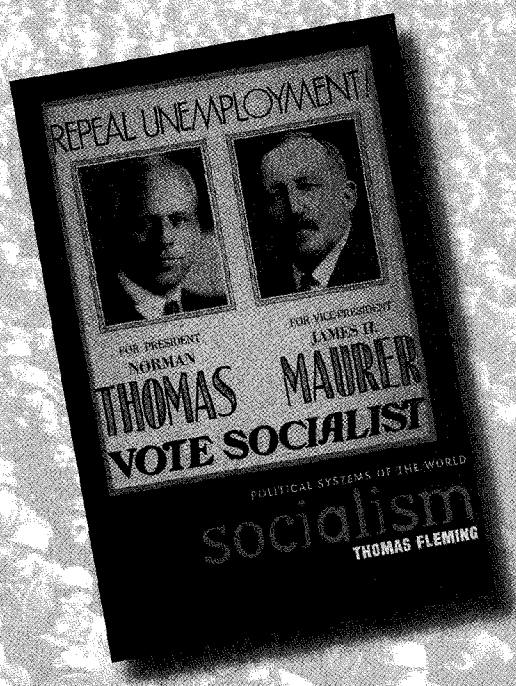


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## by Thomas Fleming

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*by Aaron D. Wolf*

# Christmas With the Devil

"The true meaning of Christmas gets lost when we believe contrary worldviews," the prisoner writes. "Our beliefs determine our views in a world where absolutes are fading away." The prisoner is dictating this for his newsletter.

Come-to-Jesus (or -Allah) experiences abound in prisons, so it's always wise to take conversion stories with a grain of salt. Most of us will look for certain signs: Is the guilty man able to articulate his repentance in something other than self-serving terms? *With God's help I have been able to forgive myself* just doesn't cut it. Also, has the guilty man embraced the justice meted out by the court system? Or does his conversion conveniently coincide with an appeal? Furthermore, is the guilty man faithful, both in his confession and his conduct, and for how long?

This will be the prisoner's 38th Christmas behind bars. In 1975 he became a Christian, and in 1980 he founded Abounding Love Ministries, preaching the Gospel on the inside and sharing his faith through books and his monthly newsletter.

"If justice would've been served, I would've gotten the death penalty," says the prisoner. "I hope that in no way have I ever given the impression that I blame anything on my parents or drugs . . . I take full responsibility."

Over the years, the prisoner has received stacks of mail from women—some curious, some bizarre, some out of Christian love. Some 20 years ago, he began corresponding with a woman named Susan LaBerge. She identified herself as a new Christian who was reaching out to him with the love and forgiveness of Christ. He began sending her his newsletter and personal letters of thanks for her encouragement. Susan said that as she read his letters her chest pounded, and she "cried and cried, realizing he'd come to the Lord, and I've come to the Lord."

After a year of correspondence, the prisoner was surprised to read that Susan wanted to visit him in person. Letters are one thing, but you just never know what sort of person you're going to find in the visiting room. Anyone can fake the lingo of Christianity in a letter. What was she up to?

When Susan arrived at the Mule Creek State Prison in Ione, California, she seemed pleasant, peaceful. They talked for some time, sharing with each other about their faith, how it was that they had become Christians. As it turned out, Susan had grown up in the area where the prisoner had committed his crimes at age 23. She had been 21 years old at the time.

There was more. She hadn't been sure whether she would say it, but his faith seemed genuine. "There's something I want to tell you," she said, and he braced himself. Was this the moment he'd dreaded? Or worse, was she a member of the Family, come to try to work some sort of spell on him?

"My mother was Rosemary LaBianca," she said.

"You're kidding," he said, stunned.

"I'm not kidding."

They sat and wept. In fact, he weeps again, retelling the story.

On August 10, 1969, Charles "Tex" Watson, Leslie Van Houten, and Patricia Krenwinkel stabbed Susan's mother 41 times in her bedroom. They killed her stepfather, Leno, in the living room in a similarly gruesome manner and, on the orders of Charles Manson, "left something witchy" behind: the words "Death to pigs" and "Rise" written in Leno's blood on the wall, and "War" carved into his abdomen. The night before, the man who claimed to be Jesus Christ had told Tex to round up the girls and begin "Helter Skelter," an apocalyptic black uprising against whites. Manson thought "blackie was too ignorant" to get the ball rolling, so he sent out his drug-addled apostles. Before butchering a pregnant Sharon Tate and her friends, Watson told them, "I am the devil, and I'm here to do the devil's business."

Charles Watson was, in fact, given the death penalty, along with Manson and all of the women who participated in those crimes, but the state of California outlawed the death penalty in 1972, which commuted all of their sentences to life in prison.

On the evening of August 10, 1969, Susan, her boyfriend, and her 15-year-old brother entered the kitchen of the LaBianca residence and were greeted by the words "Healter [*sic*] Skelter" written in blood on the refrigerator.

"All I felt from Susan," said the prisoner, "was love." He calls it a miracle.

Susan LaBerge testified at a parole hearing that Charles Watson had changed. This enraged Sharon Tate's mother, nerves still raw, and she called Susan a "stupid sh-t." Prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi commented that, when it comes to parole, it doesn't matter whether Watson has changed. To let him out would be a miscarriage of justice. Indeed, as Bugliosi and Watson have both said, justice requires the death penalty. Watson knows he'll never be a free man, not in this life.

Another Manson Family member will spend this Christmas free for the first time in 34 years. Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, convicted in 1975 of attempting to assassinate President Ford, was released from prison in August. In interviews over the years, she maintained her love for the Jesus-of-Death-Valley, who "gave me everything."

Back in Mule Creek, the prisoner will be celebrating the birth of the Child Who gave him everything, including forgiveness undeserved. ©



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*by Scott P. Richert*

# An Arresting Moment

Five years ago, I wrote of the horror that Aaron Wolf and I experienced as we spent a morning photographing the old Turner School here in Rockford. Built in 1898, the massive brick-and-stone structure was closed 80 years later by a school board attempting in vain to avoid a lawsuit over busing. Today, little effort is being made to maintain the exterior, and weeds grow up in the lawn out front and the former playground in back. Four or five days out of every week, passersby might assume that the building is still shuttered.

Would that it were. Instead, for the last quarter of a century, it has been the home of the Northern Illinois Women's Clinic—the antiseptic-sounding name for Rockford's only abortuary.

It has another name, too. The building's current owner, Wayne Webster, dubbed it "Fort Turner," but its walls offer no protection—certainly not to the children whose lives end there, but neither to the mothers who may spend the rest of their lives in regret over having sacrificed their daughters on the altar of "women's rights," nor to the fathers who pay for the ritual murder of their sons.

And if the antics of Wayne Webster over the years—dressing up like the devil to harass pro-lifers praying the rosary on the sidewalk outside the clinic; trying to drown out their prayers by shouting obscenities over loudspeakers he has mounted on the exterior walls; hanging rubber chickens (including one mounted on a crucifix) and obscene signs and pictures in the windows—are any indication, the walls of Fort Turner (where Webster also lives) have not protected him from spiritual attack. But then demons, like vampires, are always looking for an invitation to enter in, and they may well have taken up residence inside Fort Turner when the first abortion was performed there a quarter-century ago.

As if providing a location for an average of 35 murders each week is not enough, over the years Webster has hung signs in the windows of Fort Turner mocking the Christian beliefs of the pro-lifers: "Jesus loves these braindead a—holes," "These Bible-thumpers suffer from lack-o-nookie," "God bless these horny old sweathogs," "NIWC 50,000, JC 50" (that is, by the time the abortuary reached 50,000 children killed, Jesus Christ had saved only 50). But Webster's latest outrage crossed from mockery into blasphemy, when, in late summer, he hung up a sign with the inscription "Even Jesus Hates You," under an image of Christ extending the middle finger of His right hand.

The Rockford Pro-Life Initiative, a coalition of pro-life activists founded in 2008 to "eliminate abortion in the Rockford area through Christian, non-confrontational means," including "Prayer, Fasting, Education and Personal Sacrifice," asked Rockford police to enforce city ordinances against the offensive use of property by ordering Webster to remove the image. When a police sergeant refused, saying that the sign was not offensive, a veteran pro-life activist, Kevin Rilott, received permission to address the Rockford City Council. Pro-lifers showed up at the meeting with small devotional pictures of Christ, and Rilott implored the council to take action—to no avail.

The Rockford ordinances state that it is illegal to "disturb or destroy the peace of the neighborhood in which such building or premises are situated." While it is by no means certain that a court would agree that Webster's blasphemous sign violates the ordinances, many of his other actions—especially the blasting of rock music and the shouting of obscenities over the loudspeakers mounted on the outside of Fort Turner—clearly do. Yet there is no record of Webster or the clinic being issued a citation.

A few weeks after Webster hung the "Even Jesus Hates You" sign, Rilott was praying outside of Fort Turner, in the same spot where he has stood for a decade. Webster's security guard asked him to move, and when Rilott refused, he called in the police. An officer on the scene asked Rilott to pick up a large painting of Christ that he had propped up next to him; when Rilott refused, the officer called in the same police sergeant who had refused to take action on Webster's sign. After ordering the pro-life protesters to turn off their video cameras, the sergeant confiscated the painting on the grounds that it was "unattended" and threw it in the back of his squad car.

So, pictures of Our Lord giving the finger to faithful Christians are acceptable; "unattended" paintings of Christ are not. (As video footage of the incident shows, Rilott was never more than two or three feet away from the painting at any time.)

When pro-lifers use graphic images of aborted children in their protests, the media views such actions as provocation (which, in some cases, such as that of the recently murdered James Pouillon, it may well be). But you will look in vain for equivalent treatment of Webster's blasphemy (or similar actions at abortuaries around the country).

Pro-lifers' use of graphic images, I have argued, is counterproductive at best; but while they do not show us the truth, they at least portray reality. Webster's sign does neither—though it may give us a glimpse into the depths of his soul and of the sleepless nights he spends guarding the gates of Hell. ◁



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# Letter From the Upper Midwest

by Sean Scallon

## Forgotten Corners

Minnesota celebrated its 150th birthday in 2008. This occasion drove news reporter Boyd Huppert from KARE–TV in Minneapolis to travel to the corners of the state for a four-part feature series.

In the far northwest corner sits Kittson County, bordered by North Dakota and Manitoba. (Winnipeg is about an hour-and-a-half drive.) The landscape is flat prairie, and, like much of the prairie from Kansas up to Montana, it has been virtually abandoned; free trade shut down the factories, and the smaller farms were gobbled up by agribusiness thanks to government subsidies. Only the old folk have been left behind, and small towns such as Kennedy, Humboldt, Lancaster, Halma, and Karlstad are dying off along with them. The youngsters who live in the county seat of Hallock, where the school is located, dream of moving away when they turn 18—to the Twin Cities, Fargo, Grand Forks, or wherever life takes them. Perhaps the new biodiesel plant might keep a few of them around. But the subsidized biofuels market is a bubble that has already burst, so this sort of economic development is not a long-term solution.

Every state has its forgotten corners, the places that are deemed no longer "economically viable" and left to rot while capital, both monetary and human, chases the bright lights and big cities. Nobody much cares about these places except for local politicians who, thanks to good intentions run amok, make them wards of the state. Southwestern Wisconsin, where my parents' farm and ancestral homestead is located, is another "economically unviable" region—although Pennsylvania and Ohio Amish families who are moving there to buy up abandoned farms might tell a different story. But modern technology is making these forgotten corners more economically, politically, and culturally viable than they were, say, 20 years ago.

It was such technology that helped Mike Totleben find a new home in Kittson County. A native of Chicago living in Escondido, California, Totleben was hoping to start a mom-and-pop business back in 2001 and looked online at a number of small hotels for sale. He bought the Gateway Hotel in Hallock and moved there in the dead of winter to test his mettle against the worst that the season had to offer. Not even the coldest temps or the whiteout conditions that the blizzards often bring on the treeless prairies could dampen his enthusiasm for this forgotten corner. "I loved being out here ever since I've moved," Totleben told me. "I love the small town atmosphere. I love how everyone is friendly, how there are so many churches around here and good schools and I like the fact we have four seasons here instead of just one."

Totleben wasn't alone in Hallock for very long. He helped move his parents and his brother's family from California to his new home.

"My parents have never been happier, and they love it here for the same reasons I do. Although I must say it took some time for my father to get used to the fact that people here will just wave hello at you from the road or from their vehicles even if they don't know you. He couldn't understand why at first but he realizes now it's just the way people are up here. Being friendly is a way of life. It's why, if a car gets stuck in a snowbank, the next vehicle that comes along the person inside stops, gets out, and helps you out."

According to a news report about Kittson County, land up there is dirt cheap, and old but decent houses can sell for under $5,000. My wife and I were watching the program together, and pretty soon we started dreaming. Buy some land up there, and start a small sheep farm. Make some money from a home-based business. Perhaps in a few years the Canadian border will be reopened to normal traffic like it was on September 10, 2001. "The housing up here is very reasonably priced and affordable," Totleben said. "You don't need a fortune to have a starter home, and that affordability combined with small-town living is what makes for some wonderful opportunities."

Totleben's brother moved to nearby Kennedy and opened an auto-repair business, the only one in that small town. The county has a new doctor with a wife and six children. Despite declining enrollment, the Kittson County Central High School just finished building an addition.

Totleben found out quickly that knowledge of the soil and the seasons is good for business.

"Right now, as we speak, we're jammed full," he told me. "It's sugar-beet harvest time. This is the biggest sugar-beet-producing region in the country, and lots of people are here in the region to work, and they're staying in our hotel. I didn't know anything about sugar beets or sugar-beet harvesting, but I made it a point to learn, and now I've become part of the community which really gets involved with the harvest."

When I wrote my book, *Beating the Powers That Be*, I included a chapter on Minnesota's ultraleftist U.S. senator, the late Paul Wellstone. A lot of people who may have disagreed vehemently with Senator Wellstone liked him nonetheless because there wasn't a phony bone in his body. He was no "limousine liberal." He advised, "Try not to separate the life you live from the words you speak."

In the forgotten corners of the states where we live, paleoconservatives—or anyone else, for that matter—have an opportunity to live up to Wellstone's motto. Wouldn't these be great places to build communities? Or to homestead on a small farm using micro-



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farming techniques and technologies? Or to set up one-room schoolhouses to educate children while the government-school system dries up for lack of students? On my weblog, I jested that white nationalists (not the ones infatuated with socialism, paganism, and prison life) could move to the forgotten corners and virtually take over communities that are emptying out, if they really wanted to "come out from among them and be ye separate." In a way, though, I was being serious. The internet and modern technology connect population centers to forgotten corners and make such places economically viable. Your marketplace is online, and it reaches millions. And if we're talking politics and governance, a lot of village-board presidencies, township chairs, and county-commission seats are up for grabs. (Totleben ran for mayor of Hallock last November.)

It's hard being a nonconformist in the age of Walmart and McDonald's, just as it's hard being an agrarian in an office park. Only a narcissist likes to stand out in the crowd. But what if you and a few like-minded folks found a place in the world that would actually allow you to be what you want to be?

The Free State Project and its religious-right equivalent, Christian Exodus, have moved people to already populated areas. But in the forgotten corners, you can pick up what others have left behind and preserve what others gave up on.

*Sean Scallon is a journalist and freelance writer living in Arkansaw, Wisconsin.*

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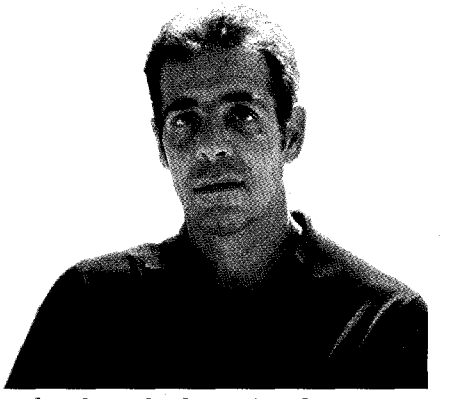
*by Justin Raimondo*

# Thirty Pieces of Silver



The news of the arrest of Stewart David Nozette, a top government scientist, on charges of spying for Israel had barely hit when none other than Steve Rosen, former top AIPAC official and accused Israeli spy, piped up in Nozette's defense. Some character witness! Rosen was recorded culling state secrets from Larry Franklin, formerly the Pentagon's top Iran analyst, but the Department of Justice, under political pressure to drop the charges and up against a judge who gave the defense everything they asked for and more, chose not to go ahead with the trial—over the objections of the agents who had worked on the case. Notably, however, the department never retracted the charges.

In the *Jerusalem Post*, Rosen decried Nozette's arrest as yet another example of antisemitic persecution in the FBI's counterintelligence unit, which is supposedly part of a "faction" that is "obsessed" with Israeli spying:

> One of the things that our case revealed is the very extreme views that are held by some in counterintelligence agencies of the CIA and FBI about Israel . . . They believe that the Mossad spied on the US on a huge scale and they believe that the Pollard case was the tip of some sort of iceberg.

Pollard didn't act alone. We know this because he knew just which documents to pilfer, seeking them by name or serial number—information that only someone at the policymaking level, perhaps in the Cabinet, would have. In 1997, as reported in the *Washington Post*, the National Security Agency (NSA) picked up a conversation between an Israeli agent and his boss in Tel Aviv that revealed the existence of a highly placed Mossad agent codenamed "Mega." None of this matters to Rosen, naturally, since he could care less about the national security of the United States. His allegiance lies elsewhere:

> When you keep repeating that the Mossad is spying on America, Israel is harming the United States, of course it harms the alliance between Israel and the US. . . . The current case is even more peculiar because the government of Israel did nothing.
>
> It's revealing that they used Israel for the sting . . . They could have used China, or others. But they chose Israel.

These comments were made less than 24 hours after Nozette's arrest, and they demonstrate the dangers of jumping the gun before all the facts are in. Yes, it's true that the feds nabbed Nozette in a "sting" or "false flag" operation: An agent of the FBI phoned Nozette, arranged a meeting, and told his quarry the Mossad wanted to partake of his services. Nozette, a top government scientist with "Q clearance"—which gave him access to our most closely guarded secrets, including nuclear-weapons data and advanced space technology—replied, "How can I be of assistance?"

Yet it wasn't a cold call that facilitated this particular sale. An investigation in 2006 into Nozette's nonprofit company, the Alliance for Competitive Technology, was originally provoked by suspicion that he had padded his expense account under a government contract, but it turned up evidence of greater crimes. A few hours after Rosen's comments were cited by the *Jerusalem Post*, the Associated Press reported that,

> In probing Nozette's finances in that case, investigators found indications he might be working for a foreign government, and they launched a national security investigation that eventually led to the undercover FBI sting, the official said.

In addition, the affidavit accompanying the criminal complaint shows Nozette worked as a consultant to "an aerospace company wholly owned by the Israeli government," and the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* reveals this to be Israel Aerospace Industries—the same company Pollard's Israeli handler, Yosef Yagur, used as a cover.

For over a decade, starting in 1998, Nozette agreed to monthly questioning, or "taskings," by company officials and was paid a total of $225,000 for his trouble. During this same period, he was working in government labs, including Lawrence-Livermore, and for DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, a branch of the U.S. Department of Defense), where he enjoyed virtually unrestricted access to U.S. secrets.

"They could have used China"? Only if they were deaf, dumb, and blind.

The affidavit is a bit of a hoot, as it contains verbatim transcripts of conversations between Nozette, who alternates between greed and hubris, and the undercover cop. My favorite howler:

> Nozette: I don't get recruited by the Mossad every day. I knew this day would come, by the way.
>
> Agent: How's that?
>
> Nozette: (Laughs) I just had a feeling one of these days.



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Agent: Really?

Nozette: I knew you guys would show up.

The agent exhibits surprise, and Nozette continues: "I thought I was working for you already. I mean that's what I always thought, [Israel Aerospace Industries] was just a front."

No, it wasn't every day Nozette was recruited into betraying his country—because twice in a lifetime was enough.

The complaint also contains an intriguing bit of information. Nozette recently took a trip to "foreign country A." Already under surveillance, he was searched before boarding the plane, and two thumb drives were found on his person. Upon his return, some three weeks later, he was again searched by TSA employees: There was no sign of the thumb drives.

There's been a bit of speculation as to the identity of "foreign country A," and one blogger at *Talking Points Memo* has suggested India as a possibility, based on Nozette's collaboration with the Indians on their recent space mission. My own best guess is Turkey—which, as readers of the last installment of this column will note, is a major player in the nuclear black market, as alleged by whistle-blower Sibel Edmonds. While working for the NSA, she translated intercepts that detailed a flourishing trade in nuclear and other high-tech secrets at U.S. military installations and government labs, with cooperative scientists being placed in key positions by government insiders, and the wholesale theft of secrets taking place with the collusion of higher-ups.

So far, the story is that Nozette was in it for the money, and yet the amount involved—he was paid a total of $11,000 by the undercover agent before the feds busted him—seems disproportionately small in relation to the scale of his crime. The complaint gives details of the sensitivity of the information he sold for the equivalent of 30 pieces of silver: advanced nuclear-weapons design and satellite technology. Indeed, Nozette boasted of his top-grade security clearance—revoked in 2006, by the way, after the investigation into his nonprofit commenced—and said he was privy to more than 20 "special access programs," U.S. government secrets so sensitive that only a very few Cabinet-level and other need-to-know officials were familiar with them.

He told the undercover agent he would be glad to reconstruct these from memory, but, as there was a lot of material involved, it would take some time: It would be best if he went to Israel to do it. "Both my parents are Jewish," he told the agent and invoked the "right of return," saying he would like, as part of his payment, an Israeli passport—just to keep his options open.

Abe Foxman is predictably outraged at Nozette's arrest, averring that he sees a "disturbing pattern" of accusations of "dual loyalty" against Jews in government employ. Yet according to news reports, including one in *Ha'aretz*, locals in Chevy Chase, Maryland, where Nozette resides, were surprised at the charges, confessing that they didn't know he was Jewish, because he hardly wore his religious-ethnic affiliation on his sleeve.

"What I find troubling and perplexing is that our government seems only interested in investigating people who are connected to Israel," babbles Foxman. Why don't we pay attention to "commercial" espionage engaged in by the Chinese, French, Russians, and others? But of course we have paid attention to the Chinese: Bloomberg News reports that "more than 50 people have been prosecuted in the U.S. since 2006 for allegedly transporting restricted technology, stealing trade secrets or conducting business espionage for China, according to the U.S. Justice Department." What happened to the Anti-Defamation League's fabled research department? Are they so busy smearing anyone who looks cockeyed at Bibi Netanyahu that they can't give Foxman better talking points? As for the Russians, do the names Aldrich Ames, Harold James Nicholson, Earl Pitts, Robert Hanssen, and George Trofimoff ring a bell? All were prosecuted relatively recently by the U.S. Department of Justice on charges of spying for the Kremlin. The French, I'm afraid, have been rather lax in this field. Perhaps they have a hard time acknowledging that we have anything worth stealing.

Foxman's victimological whining demonstrates his complete disinterest in the seriousness of Nozette's crimes. Without denying the traitor's guilt, he says that, in effect, everybody does it, so why pick on the poor little Israelis, who are just going along with the crowd? A more pathetic—and revealing—"defense" of treachery has yet to be uttered.

Why did Nozette—an acclaimed scientist, known for his brilliant success in the *Clementine* Moon mission—betray his country? After all, he had everything to lose—and what did he really gain? The idea that Nozette did it purely for money doesn't fit in with all the facts: less than $250,000 over a ten-year period? Chicken feed. There is an ideological factor here: According to Laura Rozen, the foreign-affairs blogger recently hired by *Politico*, Nozette once wrote speeches for Dan Quayle—and quit after an embarrassing appearance by Quayle in which he garbled the talking points he'd been given. Gee, I wonder how he got that job? In addition, as Democratic bloggers immediately noted, he made several campaign contributions to Republican candidates. Yes, but he's no conservative, apparently: Most of his donations went to RINOs like Olympia Snowe and Jim Kolbe.

As more details about this case come out, and Nozette goes on trial, expect to hear even more outrageous apologias coming from the usual suspects. What ought to irk readers of *Chronicles* is that most, if not all, of these excuses will be coming not from the "anti-American" left but from the ranks of ostensible "conservatives." And if that isn't a depressing measure of the American right's moral and political degeneration, I don't know what is.



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THE NEW REPUBLIC

# Fairabia

**by R. Cort Kirkwood**

Most Americans wouldn't like it if they knew that a foreign government had built a school in the United States which teaches hatred of Americans and their country. Indeed, most Americans wouldn't like it if they knew a foreign government had built a school here that teaches hatred of anyone or anything. Then again, most Americans don't know the Saudi government runs two schools in Fairfax, Virginia, under the name Islamic Saudi Academy (ISA), and they certainly don't know what that academy teaches. But thanks to President George W. Bush, they may know that "Islam is a religion of peace." That raises the distinct possibility that, even if they knew about ISA, they wouldn't much care. No good American can oppose teaching "peace," after all.

Of course, as anyone familiar with it knows, peace is not the Islamic Saudi Academy's profession: Teaching Islam is. And what it teaches is of great concern to many observers, not least the myriad senators and congressman who want to shut the place down. That didn't stop the Fairfax County board of supervisors from approving the renewal of a lease for one campus last year and, for the other campus, a major expansion that residents of the area opposed on both practical and philosophical grounds.

The latter campus sits in the rolling Virginia countryside, on the former grounds of a Christian academy that had so much trouble with the county when it tried to expand that it sold the site to the Saudis. As in Europe, Christianity is retreating before the onslaught of Islam.

The Saudi government bought the property in question, located on Popes Head Road, in 1984, and then purchased a piece of land in nearby Loudon County. Protests by Loudon County residents in 2004 ended plans for a 3,500-student, 12-grade school, so the Saudis decided to expand the facility on Popes Head Road. Saudi officials notified the locals in 2007. The fight went on for some time, with opponents of the school also trying last year to stop the county from renewing the Saudi government's lease on another campus near Alexandria, just a stone's throw from George Washington's Mount Vernon. That effort failed, with then-chairman of the county board of supervisors Gerald Connolly (now a U.S. congressman) calling opponents bigots. The county signed a $2.2 million lease on the property. And thanks to an August vote by the county board of supervisors, which included a Republican's last-minute switch in favor of the expansion, the school will add another 100,000-square-foot classroom building at the site on Popes Head Road. The building will include a mosque, and the size of the student body will rise from about 600 to 1,200 students.

What should have been the weakest argument against the academy—worries over traffic—turned out to be the strongest. Some people opposed the expansion, they said, not because they feared what kind of graduates would emerge, but because the two-lane road would be clogged with cars and school buses. As one opponent put it, "I have no issues whatsoever with the religion that the people practice, their ethnicity . . . That is totally irrelevant." That argument was weak for a simple reason: If officials could have resolved the traffic problem, opponents would have lost any grounds for standing against the expansion.

A better argument came from Jim Lafferty, a former Reagan-administration official who runs the Virginia Anti-Shariah Task Force (VAST) and stated frankly that he does not want the school to expand because he considers it a *madrassa*—a Muslim religious school. The academy teaches Wahhabism, a particularly virulent form of Islam found in Saudi Arabia. The Saudis operate 19 such institutions around the world.

Though VAST used some practical arguments about traffic and zoning in its campaign against the school, Lafferty is more concerned about the school's naked political ideology. He believes the academy is the proverbial tip of the spear in the push to impose *sharia* in the United States. "We think Sharia is a political ideology," he says, echoing *Chronicles*' former foreign-affairs editor Srdja Trifkovic, who argues that American authorities should treat Islam the way they used to treat communism: as a hostile and subversive political doctrine. "Catholic schools don't tell us we must abandon the constitution," Lafferty says. "They don't insist that we restructure civil rights. Under Sharia, only males who practice Islam have rights."

The evidence that Lafferty and his allies marshaled in their losing battle included the school's curriculum, textbooks, and a few of its more illustrious graduates. Visitors to the school would know they were in alien territory when they saw that classroom maps, according to one report, do not feature Israel.

The textbooks are full of Islamic imprecations about Jews and infidels. An analysis by the bipartisan U.S. Commission On International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) showed the books promoted a number of noxious and hateful doctrines. "The most problematic texts involve passages that are not directly from the Koran but rather contain the Saudi government's particular interpretation of Koranic and other Islamic texts," the commission reported. The textbooks "clearly exhort the readers to commit acts of violence."

For instance, 12th-grade textbooks have taught that murdering apostates and adulterers is permissible, and that oppressing non-Wahhabi Muslims is acceptable because they are "polytheists." Students read that the "Jews conspired against Islam and its people," and that taking the life and property



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of non-Muslims in non-Muslim countries is acceptable. And not surprisingly, students learn to prosecute *jihad*: "Only through force and victory over the enemies is there security and repose," one textbook states. "Within martyrdom in the path of God (exalted and glorified is He) is a type of noble life-force that is not diminished by fear or poverty." And that's just a small sample of objectionable material that somehow escaped the attention of the hate-watchers at the Southern Poverty Law Center.

In 2007, the USCIRF recommended that Congress close the school until its curriculum and textbooks could be fully vetted; even liberal members of Congress agreed. In 2007, a group of congressman, led by Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), introduced a bill calling upon the State Department to enact the commission's recommendations. Wolf has penned seven letters—five to then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and two to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the latest in March—calling for action. He reminded Clinton that the Foreign Missions Act of 1982 obliges the State Department to monitor foreign missions in the United States, and that "[c]ontinued inaction on the part of the department is inexcusable." Wolf also observed that, while the academy says it has excised offensive material from textbooks, the Associated Press reported in March "that enough sensitive material remains to fuel critics who claim the books show intolerance toward those who do not follow strict interpretations of Islam." Wolf wants the department to convene a panel of experts "to definitively [*sic*] translate and interpret the textbooks and determine exactly what is being taught at ISA." To date, he has not received a "satisfactory reply." Apparently, those charged with running national security are not concerned that an arm of the Saudi government is operating a school in the United States whose students learn to hate and kill. "This issue needs to be resolved," Wolf said in March.

> The State Department has a role to play in this controversy and needs to help resolve the issue. If there is still a problem, let's address it. If not, let's report that, too. The bottom line is there needs to be resolution to this issue. It's time to settle this.

A bipartisan group of 12 senators agrees. Led by John Kyl (R-AZ) and Charles Schumer (D-NY), they want the ISA closed until the textbook issue is resolved.

Whatever the disposition of the textbooks, one thing is certain. The school's graduates and employees have compiled résumés that would make Osama bin Laden proud. Among them are Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, who was sentenced to life in prison for plotting with Al Qaeda to assassinate President George W. Bush. At first he received a mere 30 years, but an appellate judge said the sentence was too lenient. In July, Ali went to prison for life. He was the valedictorian of his ISA class in 1999 and, according to investigative journalist Paul Sperry, voted "most likely to become a martyr."

ISA principal Abdalla I. Al-Shabnan was convicted and fined for failing to report the suspected sexual abuse of a five-year-old student. Instead of telling police, the principal told the parents to put the girl into therapy. Police say he ordered a report on the abuse deleted from a school computer.

Ismail Elbarasse had been a comptroller at ISA for more than a dozen years when police collared him and his wife five years ago for videotaping the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. The same day he was arrested, he was named as an unindicted coconspirator in the Holy Land Foundation terror-funding trial. According to the *Dallas Morning News*, prosecutors unearthed documents in Elbarasse's home connecting him to the Muslim Brotherhood and the Muslim Brotherhood to Hamas, the ultimate recipient of the Holy Land Foundation's funds. One of the documents said the Muslim Brotherhood must pursue

> a kind of grand jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and sabotaging its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all other religions.

In 1998, Elbarasse landed in jail for nine months for refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating the funding of Hamas. He shared a bank account with Mousi Abu Marzook, a man the *Dallas Morning News* called the "acknowledged political leader of Hamas."

Given the textbooks and these two characters, the latter of whom is running free, it's no wonder critics of the school are worried about its expansion. Yet ISA may not have been able to expand were it not for Representative Connolly, who accused opponents of bigotry and, according to the Traditional Values Coalition, repeatedly shouted "slander" at them when they tried to report on the notorious curriculum.

Why did Connolly so vehemently defend Islam? Examining federal campaign-contribution records, Sperry learned that Connolly accepted "thousands of dollars in donations from Saudi bagmen—including some whose homes and offices were raided after 9/11 on suspicion of terror financing." He also took money from a cofounder of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, both unindicted coconspirators in the Hamas terror-funding trial with deep connections to the terrorist Muslim Brotherhood.

And that brings us to the door of Esam Omeish. *Chronicles* readers will remember Omeish, a surgeon who worked on the Pentagon victims after the September 11 attack. In early 2007, Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine appointed Omeish to a state commission studying immigration, but Omeish was forced to resign after a video was posted on YouTube that features him ranting about Jews and *jihad*. Omeish has many connections to radical Islam, not least of which is his leadership in the mosque that prepped several of the September 11 hijackers for martyrdom. According to Paul Sperry, an authority on the "Wahhabi Corridor" in Northern Virginia, the mosque is a "turnstile for terrorists." Moreover,



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Omeish used his house as collateral to get ISA's Elbarrase out of jail after authorities caught him casing the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

Lafferty believes the academy "is engaged in activities which threaten the general welfare of residents of Fairfax County, America and Israel," and he has several more cards to play. Several Christian churches, he says, allege the county government gave the school more favorable treatment than their churches. The academy and its American employees could also be breaking tax laws: "ISA is in a regulatory 'Twilight Zone,'" Lafferty says. Although the embassy of Saudi Arabia owns and operates the school, "it does not claim any privilege associated with diplomatic territory. We cannot find any record of any taxes being paid or of any taxes deducted from the paychecks of American citizens there."

Given the nature of the textbooks and the school's bald support for *jihad*, Lafferty does not believe that a success in shutting the school would succumb to a challenge on First Amendment grounds. "Hate speech such as the anti-American and anti-Semitic material we see in the texts currently in use at ISA does not come under the First Amendment's definition of 'protected' speech." Courts may also rule that the Saudi government does not hold the same free-speech rights as a U.S. citizen.

Lafferty has been called a bigot, an Islamophobe, an Israel-lover. He has received death threats by both telephone and e-mail. VAST won't find an ally in Fairfax County government until voters dramatically change the complexion of the board of supervisors; the board permitted county officials to promote *via* their e-mail a dinner sponsored by the ISA. While such change seems unlikely in blue Northern Virginia, Lafferty says, "we are actively identifying candidates to run against Republicans and Democrats" because "candidates emerging to challenge members of the board of supervisors will increase the chance of some action by the Fairfax County government."

A 15-minute backup and a few school buses on Popes Head Road just outside Washington, D.C., are the least of the problems ISA presents. Contrary to the multicultural sentiments of the open-minded lady who opposed the school because of traffic, religion is relevant. It isn't just one reason to oppose the academy; it may be the only reason. Yet getting Americans to understand this truth may be impossible in this age of indifferentism, when all too many Christians cannot explain why Islam is incompatible with the Christian conception of God and man and the political order that conception inspired.

However weak those Christians are, the Democratic Party is worse. Consider not just Connolly, who accepts money from suspect Islamic sources, but Omeish. Last year, the Democrats permitted him to run on their ticket for Virginia's General Assembly despite the public record of his connections to the September 11 mosque and his YouTube fanaticism. The party isn't merely liberal. It's anti-American and anti-Christian, and permits outlanders and subversives to march as candidates under its banderole. Then again, a Republican voted for the Islamic Saudi Academy's expansion as well, so Democrats can't take all the blame.

*R. Cort Kirkwood is the author of* Real Men: Ten Courageous Americans To Know and Admire.

FILM

# Twice-Baked and Twice as Bad

**by Robert Dean Lurie**

Every couple months or so, my wife and I host an event we call Twice-Baked Tales. We'll have friends over for a home-cooked meal followed by a screening of a movie (usually from the 1930's, 40's, or 50's) and its remake. So far we've watched *Out of the Past* (1947) and its 1984 remake, *Against All Odds*, and both versions of *The Killers* and *The Manchurian Candidate*. We've considered *Cape Fear* for an upcoming installment, but I'm not so sure I can sit through the Martin Scorsese version again.

One thing has become abundantly clear over the course of these three screenings: The newer versions are never a patch on the originals. Hollywood seems incapable of updating a movie from its Golden Age without piling on all the sex, violence, and profanity that are now *de rigueur* in modern films. Directors and writers may cloak this crass pandering under the guise of exercising their hard-won "artistic freedom," but whatever they want to call it, it means that we the viewers have to suffer through stink bombs such as *Against All Odds*. Director Taylor Hackford makes every wrong decision imaginable: replacing the stoic Robert Mitchum with a simpering Jeff Bridges; adding tedious fight scenes and unerotic sex scenes; introducing an absurd subplot involving professional football; and insisting that every minor character's "motivation" be dissected in excruciating detail. When we get to the point where Rachel Ward stares searchingly into Jeff Bridges' eyes and says, "I would have loved to have seen you play football," I wish Robert Mitchum would magically appear in Bridges' place and respond, "Baby, I don't care."

Our guests for the Twice-Baked events—Jessica and Stjiepan, a couple from my wife's graduate program—did not start off as old-movie buffs. Early on, Stjiepan made the crack that he would probably have trouble staying awake during the black-and-white features. But just a month or so later, upon hearing that the remake of *The Killers* was from 1964, he commented, "Hey, that's good; they're both old. Maybe they'll both be good this time."

We started the screenings on a lark; it was a nutty variation on the "dinner and a movie" concept, a chance for us to get together, cook something, polish off a bottle or two, and laugh at the TV set for a few hours. But, as we soon discovered, the act of watching two generations tell the same story also made for a fascinating and sobering cultural study. I, for one, was honestly shocked to see how far Hollywood had fallen—both in its standards of decency and the quality of its storytelling—



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in such a short span of time. I now understand the look on my grandfather's face every time he witnesses some new depravity on daytime television—the look that seems to say, *I fought in three wars to defend this?*

This is not to say that I am in any way nostalgic for the Hays Code (a draconian set of standards that dominated the film industry from the 1930's through the 1950's), but I am nostalgic for the creativity and discipline that resulted from working under its constraints. Even as the power of the Hays (later Breen) office began to wane in the mid 50's, a shared set of values remained—for a while at least. What's more, the idea that films didn't explore "difficult" subjects back then is a myth; a viewing of either *The Man With the Golden Arm* or *Anatomy of a Murder* should dispel such condescending notions. The difference is that the "edgy" films of that period addressed their tough themes with intelligence and taste, carefully pulling the viewer into the narrative in such a way that the more unpleasant aspects of the story could be faced without necessitating a shower afterward.

I am of the generation that brought *Trainspotting* to the screen. While it's true that the film depicts the horrors of drug addiction with unflinching accuracy, its relentless profanity and scatology ensures that just about anyone over 50 will find it unpalatable.

*The Man With the Golden Arm*, on the other hand, is just as effective, but it can be watched across the generations. It provokes discussion rather than revulsion.

There is precious little art to modern cinematic storytelling, only technique. And that technique is most often employed to make things louder, faster, bloodier, sexier. If that's what the audience wants, fair enough. It's a business, after all. But could Hollywood at least leave its own classics alone? Is that too much to ask? In what twisted world was the original *Cape Fear* not scary or violent enough? Did we really need to see Robert De Niro bite some girl's ear off? Did that add anything to our enjoyment of our brief time here on Earth? And what kind of hubris fuels these repeated attempts to remake movies that originally starred Robert Mitchum? Is there a new *Thunder Road* in the wings, swapping moonshine stills for meth labs?

Obviously there is a lot of insecurity at play in Hollywood these days, not to mention a dearth of ideas. Any appeal for restraint gets met with spittle-flecked cries of "Censorship!" Perhaps it's best, then, to cloak the criticism in a summons to action. We challenge Hollywood to be original again, to rediscover subtlety, to forego computer-generated effects in favor of a little thing called story, to stop insisting that everyone from lawyers to doctors to school principals talks like a street thug, and—for God's sake—to have enough humility to recognize that *The Manchurian Candidate* cannot be improved upon.

The time frame between original and remake, as well as the criteria for what constitutes a classic in the first place, is shrinking. It was announced recently that a remake of *Footloose* is in the works, and new versions of *Halloween* and *Friday the 13th* have already come and gone. Hell, they remade *Walking Tall* and set it in the Pacific Northwest! (They kept the stick, though.) Today, movies based on toys (*Transformers* and *G.I. Joe*) are surefire blockbusters, yet you could arguably have a more substantive experience watching the home videos I made as a boy, dropping rocks on action figures and sending toy spaceships over the garden wall.

The practice of remaking movies dates back to the beginning of the medium itself, and they haven't all been bad. The versions of *Ben-Hur* and *The Wizard of Oz* that are now considered classics are essentially remakes—or at least new adaptations. But now it is difficult to find a movie that is not a remake, a sequel, an adaptation of a comic book, or a "re-imagining" of an old TV show. It seems we are fast approaching the point where there are no original ideas at all, only dumbed-down rehashes of earlier triumphs.

So I'm gearing up for another round of Twice-Baked Tales. Only this time, I may do myself a favor and skip the second reel.

*Robert Dean Lurie is the author of* No Certainty Attached *(VCP).*


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*by James O. Tate*

# Being and Nothingness

The financial collapse, which loomed so large more than a year ago as trillions of dollars disappeared and politicians ran for cover, may have suggested a lesson or two. The chairman and a former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, the former head of Goldman Sachs (nice name, that), the president of the United States, two candidates to replace him, and many another all showed evidence of panic and a remarkable unanimity of opinion, which finally turned to the image of printing lots of paper. Jumping down and spinning around to pick a bale of greenbacks, the national leadership junked years of economic theory and development so decisively that the field of discourse was abandoned to the opposing ideology of statism, socialism, even communism. No limit whatsoever was accorded to the assumption of debt, and that for—whatever. We would have bailouts or bale-outs for the financial sector and the banks and the automobile industry, and a revolution in healthcare, all at the same time as gross deficits, numerous wars, and blame enough to go around for just about everyone. The citizens, or many of them, had long since maxed out their credit cards and borrowed against their houses: The bubble was inclusive. And so was the shared but unstated assumption that we want the bubble back—the bubble was a good thing. As Warren Buffet said, when the tide is going out, we find out who's been swimming naked. And I think that Bernie Madoff (nice name, that) will be remembered even after the money he made off with is forgotten.

Yes indeed, but my purpose here is not to engage in economic points but in other ones. The not altogether unrelated attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center just over eight years ago was another case of now you see it, now you don't. The symbol of money, of the dollar, of international commerce, was vaporized along with the humanity and the digitalized archives as Islamic fanatics more than suicidally but with nihilistic violence attacked these and other material images of American power. The terrorist agenda to provoke doubt, panic, confusion, and, more subtly, overreaction was no bluff; it rested on a tough insight into reality, and into unreality.

This grim situation suggests various reflections: One is that nihilistic violence has its Western precedents. Another, that the look into the abyss is best dealt with philosophically or fictionally, or otherwise at long range. After the 20th century, there are many survivors left who know that a look over the precipice is best entertained obliquely. So there is a literature of the confrontation with the void, and those familiar with French, Russian, and other such forays know what that is. Looking further back, there is precedent in tragic vision and in the traditions of philosophical speculation that allows us to gaze upon the Medusa-head without ensuing petrifaction. In truth, there is a literature of confronting the void even in popular culture, as is well known in various strands of the horror film. But it is in more conventionally respectable precincts that we hear of existential angst and the crisis of modernity and its rendition in fiction. Sometimes this topic appears to be "political," but it is more serious and searching than any such category can contain.

So as far as the oblique or second-hand approach to the sense of crisis is concerned, there are various vehicles to be nominated. And one of them that comes to mind these days also presents itself when I am asked to nominate a novel of quality that is off the beaten track. And this same novel comes to mind when I am asked to identify a novel that is a model of composition.

That novel is *The Revenge for Love*

**Wyndham Lewis**
*The Revenge for Love (1937)*

by Wyndham Lewis, first published in 1937. But as this novel deals with communist agitation, gun-running into Spain, and the usual British parlor pinks, we must be precise about the situation in which it was written, for even today people refer to it erroneously as a novel having to do with the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. That's not true, though the association is there. Lewis wrote the novel in 1934-35, before the war but not before the tensions. The publication was delayed until after the start of the war in Spain, whence the association. The book begins in Spain and ends there, but most of it is set in England and involves an exposition about trendy fellow travelers of the 30's. That is the sense in which the novel is a "political" one, but I think that this specificity is provisional—certain characters must speak and act in their particular way, but this is only the occasion of the engagement. The essential subject is deeper, more elusive, and more worthy than tags or labels can indicate.

The story has a circular design: We begin and end with Percy Hardcaster, that professional communist agitator, in a Spanish prison. In a sense, the novel's statement is determined by its form: Percy before, and Percy after. There has been a change in him—he has been touched in spite of his tough attitudes, and not only by the amputation of his leg.

Percy is the only character in Lewis's work to share his discarded first name; and Hardcaster puns on "hard cast" and "hard castle" to suggest the man's toughness. In both these ways, P.H. has something in common with his creator. That is perhaps what is to be changed—and may I add that this Percy gets pierced? Though Percy is



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changed in a necessary way, there is also a sense that his integrity is real, at least in comparison with the parlor pinks whom he falls among back in London.

A scene between Percy and Gillian Phipps is at the heart of the novel's dialectic. The professional working-class Red tells off the bourgeois bohemian toff and teaser, Gillian Phipps, wife of Tristram the artist, in a scene of opposition that is physical and personal and literal, but also intellectual allegory or dialectic. She is according to him a snob and a phony—he tells the hard truth. He doesn't quite get his own implication that the communist line is merely whatever set of lies will generate power.

> But, if it ever comes to a showdown and if there's a bit of a shoot-up, it will be a matter of complete indifference to me which of you—whether you "communist" intellectuals, you fancy salon-revolutionaries, you old-school-tie pinks, or on the other hand your fascist first-cousins—are wiped out.

For stating these truths about the nonexistence of left-wing solidarity, Percy is severely punished.

In contrast to him stand two countervailing figures—the untalented artist Victor Stamp and his mistress, Margot. Their love is such as to provoke the revenge insisted upon by fate and arranged by communist-capitalist betrayers. Victor and Margot are not ideologues—far from it. And the alternative vision is that of Margot, who does not see Victor as better than he is, but loves him anyway. No matter what lies she hears, what deceptions are exposed, what false bottoms are identified—in houses, in cars, in ideas, in actions—Margot courageously perseveres, so that her dedication, her love, is the truest image of reality in the book. Or perhaps the truest thing is her hysterical laughter at confronting a dwarf, or at confronting the void itself.

In a world of bottomless falsehoods, hers are the values that are real, if vulnerable. And in a novel written in the spirit and with the finish of Conrad, Lewis achieved a command of detail and sense of proportion and an appeal to human identification that he had never achieved in his "puppet" fiction of the late 1920's, towering though that was. Along the way is the detailed workmanship that redoubles the power of the architectonic strength—the replication of the "false bottoms" that Lewis had intended to give a title to his fiction; the puns on *victor* and *stamp*, even on the writer's name in "Lewis gun"; the repeated examples of fraud, forgery, lies, absurd ideology, and experience that seems unreal, but is not. Add to that the informal manner, the vulgar breeziness of approach, the reification of clichés, the grotesque humor, the philosophical engagement, the dramatic force—and you have a novel that impresses itself on the memory. And not only that. It also impresses itself upon the mind as the best representation of ideological distortions in modern literature, eclipsing works of Malraux, Hemingway, Orwell, Koestler, and Trilling.

The combination or dynamic blend of tragedy and satire meant that Lewis had found a way to take advantage of the form of the political thriller in order to engage rather than alienate his implied reader. Needless to say, this accomplishment did him no good at all 70-plus years ago, for the book sold fewer than 3,000 copies in a hostile environment and was actually conspired against in New York City by the editors of *Partisan Review*, who turned down the favorable notice given it by Rebecca Citkowitz on three occasions!

But this combination does us a lot of good today, if we take advantage of the opportunity. Copies of *The Revenge for Love* in the 1991 Black Sparrow publication, edited by Reed Way Dasenbrock, can be easily obtained by exploiting the obvious contemporary technology and will deliver an experience that is justified in every way. The power of the grotesque mode, which synthesizes laughter and tears, which frees us from the preformulated so that we may apprehend a higher reality, is here harnessed in a form we might refer to as black humor. The two best novels of Nathanael West come to mind, as well as, perhaps, Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*; but behind such work loom other precedents and connections—and even effects or results.

In one of his autobiographies (*Rude Assignment*, 1950), Lewis recalls his bohemian days in Paris just after the turn of the century, when he was educated by reading the great Russian novelists—in French. He devotes a paragraph to Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*, and goes on, "I too came out of that mantle of Gogol: a lot of things have happened to me since, but there was a time when I did not follow my own nose, but his." And perhaps we remember that in a notebook of 1876, Dostoyevsky himself wrote that "Tragedy and satire are two sisters who go hand in hand, and the name of both of them, taken together, is truth."

The impression of truth is, in Lewis's imposing novel, crafted dialectically, through a sensibility formed by the great Russian and refined by the brilliant Pole—a sensibility attuned to the mysteries of being and nothingness in the violent 20th century. ©

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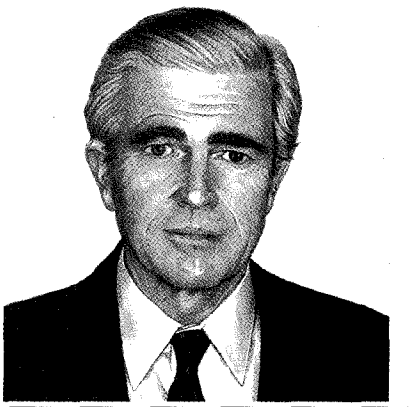
*by George McCartney*

# Heisenberg's Curious Principle



**A Serious Man**

*Produced by Studio Canal and Working Title Films*
*Written and directed by Ethan and Joel Coen*
*Distributed by Focus Features*

Werner Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle is hardly cinematic, yet Ethan and Joel Coen have made it a linchpin in the plots of two of their films, *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2001) and their latest work, *A Serious Man*. In the first, Tony Shalhoub, playing a ferociously imperious lawyer of abysmal ethics, plans to use it to defend his lovely client against murder charges. He will demonstrate that all the evidence against her doesn't matter. "You see," he says in mystical tones, "sometimes the more you look, the less you really know. . . . There's this heini in Germany, who wrote it out in numbers." Once the jury grasps this dazzling feat of epistemological jujitsu, they will speedily decide the prosecution's case is utterly without merit. In *A Serious Man*, Heisenberg returns to upset more certain certainties. If nothing else, the Coen brothers seem to want to educate moviegoers on the mysteries of quantum physics. Heisenberg's Principle is famous—or infamous—for demonstrating that, at the quantum level of reality, "we can never know what's going on with certainty," as Prof. Larry Gopnick (Michael Stuhlbarg), the protagonist of *A Serious Man*, triumphantly informs his college physics class. To prove his point, he's filled three huge blackboards with the requisite equation—a daunting exercise in higher futility, some would say.

*A Serious Man* concerns the problem of inescapable indeterminacy in a world that unfairly demands we act as if we know what's going on. In its own perverse way, the film satirically echoes Greek tragedy: Oedipus may be wholly ignorant of his fatal origins, but he's nevertheless held responsible for them. To introduce this conundrum, the film begins with a vignette set in a 19th-century Polish *shtetl*. A venerable old man visits a couple's home on a winter's night, only to receive a welcome frostier than the subzero weather outside. The lady of the house surmises that he's a *dybbuk*, an evil spirit of Jewish lore. This *dybbuk*, she's convinced, has taken over the body of her dead relation. The old man finds the charge delightfully preposterous, but the woman holds her ground. What happens next establishes the theme of uncertainty at the heart of the Coens' odd mixture of black comedy, metaphysical dread, and their patented misanthropy.

No sooner is the Polish preface over than we cut to the film's title credits. In the middle of the screen is a luminous circle toward which the camera slowly moves. Finally, the camera passes into the circle, while the soundtrack faintly murmurs with a seemingly familiar melody. As the camera continues moving forward, we realize it's passing through a dark, red tunnel. Once it reaches the tunnel's end, it comes out into the light through the portal of a boy's ear. With a start, we realize we've been inside the boy's head. He is Larry's 13-year-old son Dan (Aaron Wolff). Dan has been sitting at his desk in Hebrew school, where he's been studiously ignoring his lesson in order to listen to a popular song piped through an earpiece plugged into his transistor. We can now hear its fully amplified guitar chords driving the familiar lyrics: "When the truth is found to be lies / and all the joy within you dies / don't you want somebody to love / don't you need somebody to love."

The 1967 Jefferson Airplane anthem is calling for a desperate, headlong pursuit of indiscriminate sex as the only worthwhile endeavor in a demonstrably senseless world. Not exactly the ideal encouragement for a boy on the eve of his bar mitzvah. Meanwhile, a few miles away, Larry is undergoing a physical exam, and his doctor has just finished probing his ear. Father and son are visually linked on the very day that they will begin to find that their truths may all be lies and that the joy within them may likely die. A back-and-forth montage between father and son establishes that there's a profound difference between what's going on inside their heads and what's actually happening in the world around them.

This disconnect between subjective assumption and objective reality shouldn't come as a surprise to Larry. As a physics professor, he is well acquainted with the discrepancy between the phenomenal world our senses report to us and the world of matter and energy mathematics reveals underneath it. But Larry, it seems, has managed to compartmentalize his thinking so that he doesn't see the connection between his professed subject and his personal life. He can cheerfully explain to his bored students that quantum physics proves we can never really tell what's going on, but he hasn't applied this insight to his experience of the world beyond the classroom. He hasn't considered how the cultural presuppositions of his Jewish-American upbringing may have prevented him from accurately perceiving the most elementary facts of his daily existence. So when his



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wife informs him one evening that she wants him to give her a *get* (a Jewish ritual divorce), it strikes him, in his own words, as a "bolt from the blue." His wife's defection couldn't be more inopportune. His application for tenure is under review, and, since he's an unpublished professor, he is less than a shoo-in.

Then there's that envelope stuffed with hundred-dollar bills that Larry found on his desk. He surmises that it was left by Clive Park (David Kang), a failing Korean student who has been demanding not just a passing grade but a B in his course. When Larry confronts Clive with the envelope, he upbraids the lad. "Actions have consequences. . . . Not just [in] physics. . . . And we both know about your actions."

The young man coolly denies knowing anything about anything, invoking his own Heisenberg principle. "No sir. I know about my actions."

Larry replies, "I can interpret, Clive. I know what you meant me to understand."

Unfazed, Clive reasonably points out that this is "mere surmise; very uncertain." Later, Clive's father displays similar *chutzpah*. He threatens to sue Larry on the grounds that he has accused his son of bribery. At the same time, he accuses Larry of taking the bribe and not changing the grade. Shocked by such audacity, Larry counters, "It doesn't make sense. Either he left the money, or he didn't."

The imperturbable Mr. Park flatly replies, "Please. Accept mystery."

And there's more. Someone is sending unsigned letters to the tenure committee charging Larry with moral turpitude. The police are stopping by his house to investigate his slovenly live-in brother for his gambling and propositioning propensities. Meanwhile, Larry's wife's has demanded he move out so she can better conduct her relationship with her fat slob of a lover, the highly successful Sy Ableman (Fred Melamed), an unctuous, self-satisfied bully whom the town's Jewish community considers a genuinely able man—"a serious man," in fact. Compared with him, the innocent, decent Larry is nothing but a feckless *schnook*.

Desperate, Larry seeks counsel at his temple, where Rabbi Nachtner (George Wyner) talks to him in riddles and fables that Larry judges beside the point. Nachtner tells him of a dentist who discovers Hebrew characters reading "help me" on the back of an unsuspecting *goy*'s teeth. Thoroughly disturbed, the dentist wonders if this is *Hashem* calling on him to help this fellow. If so, in what way? Should he even tell the *goy* about this seeming revelation? He goes to Nachtner for counsel. Since there is no natural explanation for the markings, Nachtner advises him to forget about them. "We can't know everything," he observes complacently. Meanwhile, "helping others couldn't hurt."

Larry is not appeased. How does this story apply to him? Nachtner responds, "We all want the answer, but *Hashem* doesn't owe us the answer, Larry. *Hashem* doesn't owe us anything. The obligation runs the other way." His sense of the fitness of things offended, Larry asks about the *goy*. "The *goy*?" Nachtner muses. "Who cares?" (I can't think of another movie in which Jews refer to gentiles as *goys*. And here the term is used dismissively, if not contemptuously, and not only by Nachtner. Leave it to the Coens to rend the veil on this one. Dream as we will, few of us have transcended the tribal us-and-them mentality.)

Larry, as you've no doubt gathered, is a Job figure. Though innocent, he's put upon horribly and wants to know why. The Coens seem to have told his story because it's in part their own. Larry resembles their father, who taught economics at the University of Minnesota and reared them in a Minneapolis suburb similar to one we see in their film. Why they wanted to ridicule their antecedents, I'm not sure. Maybe they're mocking themselves also with Larry's son, a young pothead who is about the same age Joel was in 1967. The brothers have always had fun with people who expect the world to make sense. This seems to be an aspect of their metaphysical anger. Why are we made to expect purpose and justice in a world evidently devoid of both?

Their 2007 Oscar winner, *No Country for Old Men*, also raised this issue. The brothers had found in *No Country*'s author, Cormac McCarthy, a kindred atheist—or existentialist, at least. The narrative depicted people bereft of providence and condemned to live in an absurd world in which they are hunted remorselessly by an inexplicable fate. It seemed to me at the time that the brothers might also have signed on with McCarthy to be on the lookout for some sign that maybe their atheism was ill founded. For by the end of his bleak tale, McCarthy has pushed the absurdist notion so hard that he nearly pokes through the apparent nothingness into something like hope. The Coens' adaptation scrupulously retained this element even at the risk of compromising the film's dramatic effectiveness. Perhaps, the novel and film seemed to say, we're not abandoned after all. In *A Serious Man*, however, the Coens have reverted to their earlier conviction. There is no God. Or if there is, he's a perverse tyrant who enjoys randomly dishing out unspeakable sufferings and humiliations to all comers. To pretend otherwise is to make a *schnook* of yourself. Their aesthetic response to our fate in this world is to co-opt the sadistic *Hashem*. They put themselves in his place so, like the malevolent deity, they, too, can have sport with the unwary. The ending of their film brings this willfully home.

Still, there's no gainsaying the artistry of the Coens' filmmaking. Its intensity makes me think they aren't cemented into their position. They may mock and humiliate their characters with glee, but such perverse storytelling seems to me an expression of their unspoken and perhaps as-yet-unrealized anguish. You can't be this angry with God and man without caring intensely for both.



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# Dignity

The phrase *human dignity* is as ubiquitous today in enlightened global discourse as *human rights*. Indeed, the two are intimately connected, the first being regarded as a subset of the second, as in, "the right to human dignity." But *dignity* in this context is used abstractly and in a universal sense, rather than concretely and in a personal one. In postmodern understanding, dignity is inherent in every human being by virtue of his humanity and demands equal respect from other human beings. But *dignity* used in the abstract, postmodern, humanist sense, has nothing to do with the traditional meaning of the word. I am not even sure there *is* a word, in any language with which I am familiar, that conveys the new meaning.

My Langenscheidt's Latin dictionary defines *dignitas* as "worthiness, merit; a) dignity, grandeur, splendour, dignified exterior, majesty, distinction, element; b) personal dignity, honour, esteem, authority; c) rank, high office." Each of these definitions has something in common, and that is its obvious specific or personal application. *Dignity*, as we see here, is not a generic term; it applies to some distinguishing quality, to something earned, or to something peculiarly inherited. There is nothing universal about it. All human beings are alike in having been made in the image of God, but that is not the same thing as saying that they share equally in the divine dignity, any more than they share in the divine goodness. Certain images, moreover, are truer than others to the original, and these differences, too, are attributable to personal, not to universal, human qualities.

The concepts of natural law and natural rights, which descend from the Roman jurists, were revived in the Western world in the 18th century and became ubiquitous, nearly omnipotent, over the next two centuries, as the "dignity of man," along with other abstractions like "liberty," "equality," and "fraternity," proclaimed by French radicals in the revolutionary period became the established foundation of the developing modern democracies, in theory at least if not always in practice. In the 19th century there did appear to be, in Great Britain especially, a connection between the extension of suffrage and other political rights and the dignity of a citizen, as the demands of Western peoples for what Hegel called "recognition" were in some degree met by their rulers. But with the advent of mass democracy in the 20th century, a paradoxical development set in. The more democratic society became, the less dignified democratic man appeared. José Ortega y Gasset deplored this lack of dignity, without ever using the term itself, in his book *The Revolt of the Masses*, in which he defines the mass as

> all that which sets no value on itself—good or ill—based on specific grounds, but which feels itself "just like everybody," and nevertheless is not concerned about it; it is, in fact, quite happy to feel itself as one with everybody else.

The mass man has no aspirations, makes no demands on himself, yet demands that all his demands should be met as he demands them. Clearly, such a creature as democratic mass man is incapable of dignity. In fact, he cannot be expected to understand the meaning of the word, though democratic theory and sentiment drape him with it as if it were a Roman toga, and universalist theory extends it to the entire human world.

Socialism, which is really another word for mass democracy, has no standards regarding behavior or aspiration. Socialism is much more than an economic and political system. Socialism is a way of viewing oneself in relation to the world, and to other people. Socialism has a face, just as monarchy does. The face of monarchy is the king's face on a coin. The face of socialism is the mob in all its dreary conformity, vulgarity, sloppiness, and lack of dignity. Socialism is advanced democracy, and Sir Henry Sumner Maine described democracy as nothing other than monarchy inverted. Dignity is always established and maintained at the pinnacle of society, as a model for the classes below it, to imitate and maintain in the manner appropriate to their nature and status. (It is a kind of heresy to deny that members of the lower orders are less capable of dignity than dignitaries and blue bloods are.) But mass democracy, though not classless in terms of economic and political power, is socially classless in appearance and in manners—in part because the elite wishes to disguise the fact of its own power and exclusivity by supporting the illusion that elites have been done away with by democracy, in part because what is called the elite is really no more than a minority of mass men with mass aspirations that they have succeeded in realizing for themselves. So modern society is without dignity at the top, or in the middle, or at the bottom. It was said—I believe of Lord Asquith—that he lacked the aristocratic manner on entering a room. Today, that would be an observation meaningless to almost everybody, of whatever station in life. The modern world is a place without dignity, a world where the true thing, as distinct from arrogance and pretense, is highly suspect. Indeed, this highest and most noble, perhaps, of all human



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qualities, is despised in men.

A snob (and social impostor) in an English mystery novel of the interwar period declared that six centuries at the very least are required to produce a gentleman. That is an enormous exaggeration, yet it is only an exaggeration. Certainly a single generation is ordinarily insufficient to produce a man or woman of true dignity, though there is surely such a thing as natural, untutored dignity, rare as it is. Just here, T.S. Eliot's criticism of meritocracy is relevant. Eliot argued that, in a meritocracy, members of the ruling elite—and of subelites—are continually rising and falling. This exaggerated upward and downward mobility is, of course, a process of economic rather than of social displacement, since, in a meritocracy, social position is determined by money, not by family, background, and breeding. Despite the complaints of egalitarians that the children of the modern rich enjoy an unearned advantage that ensures them a life of wealth and "privilege," the really striking thing about postmodern society is the ease with which high position is forfeited, often within the space of a single generation, as happened so frequently among WASP families of the upper class in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's—very often by purposeful downward mobility, in which the self-made *déclassé* shucks a gentleman's dignity together with a gentleman's wardrobe, and a gentleman's career. Either way, whether social displacement is effected by the natural instability of fiercely competitive elites or sought by traitorous elements among the old-line upper class, the result is the same, or nearly. Edmund Burke's "unbought grace of life," which cannot indeed be bought but can be transferred across the generations, is continually interrupted in transmission, and at last dies out altogether. Chief among these graces is personal dignity.

Dignity is imposed from the top down, but the top is not the president, or the king, or even the emperor. The top is the throne of God and, just below Him, God's Church on earth. I am not concerned here with the quarrelsome issue as to which Church that actually is. Yet, being a Catholic, and because the liturgies of the Catholic Church and Her separated sister, the Anglican Church, are commonly supposed to display the greatest dignity and the greatest ceremony of all the Christian denominations, I have singled them out as examples of what it is I am talking about.

Speaking generally, the Catholic Church has the greater theological truth, the Anglican (nowadays) the greater sense of the dignity of theological truth. Not even Westminster Abbey can outshine St. Peter's Basilica in liturgical splendor, but St. Peter's is more the exception than the rule within the body of the Roman Church, while, within the Anglican Church, Westminster Abbey is the parishes' admired model, whose style is imitated so far as it is affordable. The Anglicans have adapted to the modern democratic world by removing dignity from their theology (women priests, "gay marriage," and the rest), while retaining it in their liturgy. The Romans have done the exact opposite. They have retained intact every iota of traditional Catholic theology while supplanting the Tridentine Mass with the Novus Ordo Mass after the Second Vatican Council. Following Vatican II, the liturgical reformers substituted a Babel of vernacular tongues for Latin, previously the universal language of the Church; banished private prayer and meditation during Mass in favor of noisy "participation" by the congregation; reemphasized the Sacrifice of the Mass as a communal "meal"; communalized the Creed by translating *Credo* as "We believe"; installed eucharistic ministers (almost invariably ill dressed) at Holy Communion; replaced the fine old hymns, so expressive of the entwined reciprocal dignity of God and man, with hootenanny songs performed on guitars; celebrated Clown Masses; allowed such practices as the celebration of birthdays by handing out chocolates before the recessional hymn; and acquiesced in the appalling—the almost heretically undignified—practice of applauding at Mass. (For a full appreciation of all that they did, I recommend *The Heresy of Formlessness*, by Martin Mossbach.) The result is an Anglican service that worships man in a dignified liturgy worthy of the dignity of God, and a Catholic one that worships God in a vulgar liturgy more appropriate to a celebration of the universal centrality of man.

As a number of authors have noted over the past couple of centuries, democratic fervor shares a nature with religious fervor. The ideology known as democratism is the chief engine behind the destruction of social dignity, and it has been responsible as well for the desacralization of modern religious practice, beginning with the Wesleyan revival, continuing through the 19th-century American camp meeting, and arriving at the orgiastic spectacles staged by the megachurches of our own time. If dignity is not to be found in religious celebration, then where else could it possibly be found? The modern answer seems to be the United Nations, where notions such as the Dignity of Man and Human Rights are loudly professed and defended, day in and day out. But what of the dignity of the dignitaries routinely on display in the assembly there? Nikita Krushchev pounded the dais with his shoe. President George W. Bush delivered yammering speeches on the religion of democracy that would have done discredit to a high-school debater. Qaddafi, the King of Kings, only the other day and speaking for 96 minutes, accused capitalists of having created the swine-flu virus, suggested that the United Nations be moved to Libya, and expressed the wish that Barack Obama might remain president forever and ever, amen.

Human dignity, as the phrase is used today, does not dignify human beings, nor does it really try to. Instead, it dignifies man's wants and preferences by elevating them to the status of rights. In this way, men are said to hold dignity by virtue of demanding things, not of being something in themselves. Modern religion connives, knowingly or not, in this error by encouraging the belief that the dignity of God expresses itself in what He does for men, and the dignity of men in what they demand from other men—but, most of all, from God. ◈



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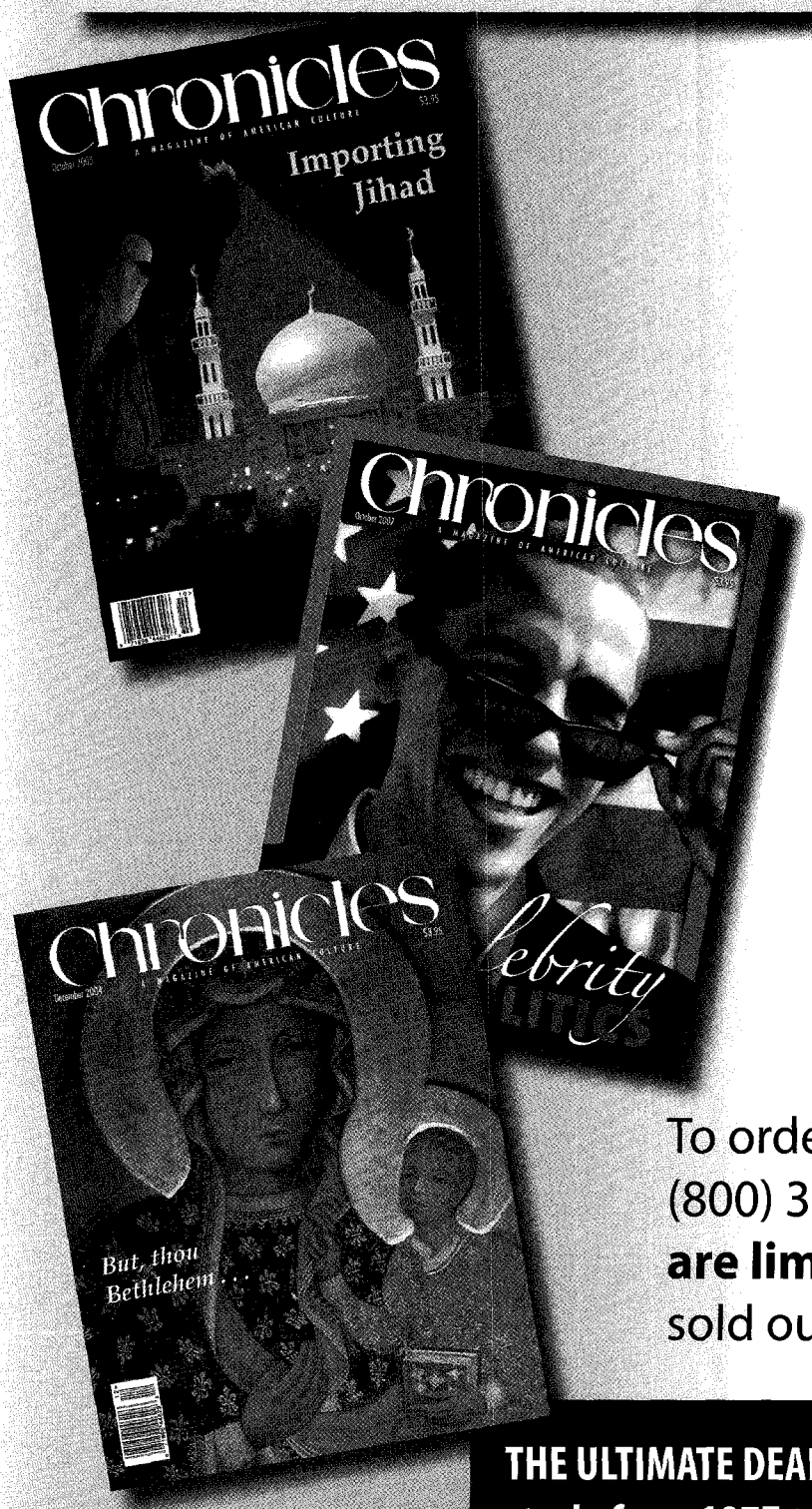


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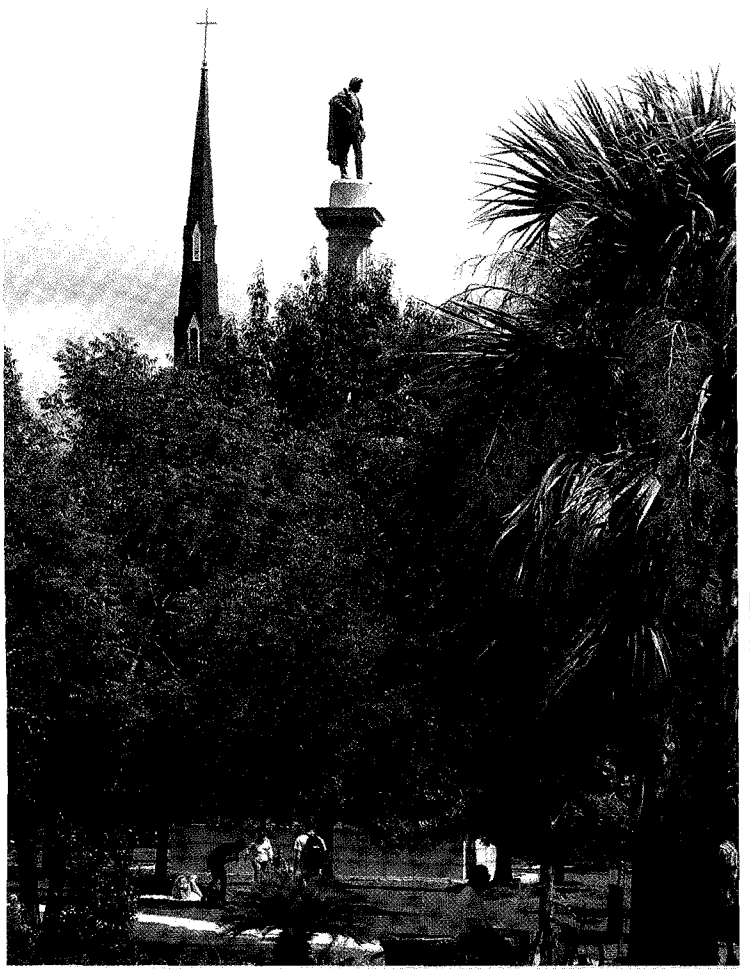
**EIGHTH ABBEVILLE INSTITUTE SCHOLAR'S CONFERENCE**

# "State Nullification, Secession, and the Human Scale of Political Order"

## Charleston, South Carolina, February 4 -7, 2010



George Kennan, author of the Cold War policy to contain the Soviet Union and described by some as the "conscience of America," taught that a regime can be dysfunctional by simply becoming *too large*. Near the end of a long career in service to his country, he thought the American regime had grown too large for self government and that we should begin a public debate on how to divide it in the direction of a more human scale.

Today, for the first time in 144 years, State nullification and secession have entered public discourse. The Founders considered nullification and secession as remedies to unconstitutional acts of the central government. The aim of the conference is to recover this neglected part of the American constitutional tradition and to explore its intimations for today.

## Lecturers:

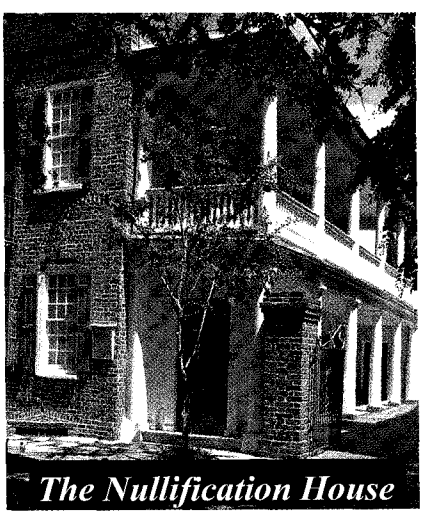
- **Kent Masterson Brown**, Historian and Constitutional Lawyer
- **Marshall DeRosa,** Political Science, Florida Atlantic University
- **Thomas DiLorenzo,** Economics, Loyola University, Maryland
- **Peter Jones,** Former Director, The Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh, and Fellow, Royal Society of Edinburgh • **Yuri Maltsev,** Economics, Carthage College and former advisor to Gorbachev's government on *perestroika* • **Donald Livingston,** Philosophy, Emory University • **Thomas Naylor,** Founder, The Second Vermont Republic • **Lawrence W. Reed,** President, Foundation for Economic Education • **Kirkpatrick Sale,** Director of The Middlebury Institute • **Kyle Scott**, Political Science, University of Houston • **Clyde Wilson,** History, University of South Carolina

## Registration:

**Place:** The Francis Marion Hotel at the low conference rate of $129 per night (double or single) ***while they last***. For reservations call the Hotel at (843) 722-0600.

**Conference Fee:** includes lectures, breakfast, luncheon reception at the Washington Light Infantry Armory, two finger food suppers, the banquet, and transportation to view items rarely seen: South Carolina ordinance of secession, the original secession flag, the secession banner, and much more:$350 if received by **November 15**; $400 thereafter. **Commuter:** lectures only–$200; with banquet $260. **Scholarships:** a limited number for full time college or graduate students. **To Register**: (and for more about the lectures) visit www.abbevilleinstitute.org. For all other questions call (404) 377-0484 or email the Institute at: abbevilleinst@bellsouth.net.

**Visit Historic Charleston:** The conference Hotel is within walking distance of the graceful historic section. The conference rate applies for days immediately before and after the conference. Boat tours to Fort Sumter leave from Liberty Square, a short walk from the hotel. See www.fortsumtertours.com.



*The Nullification House*

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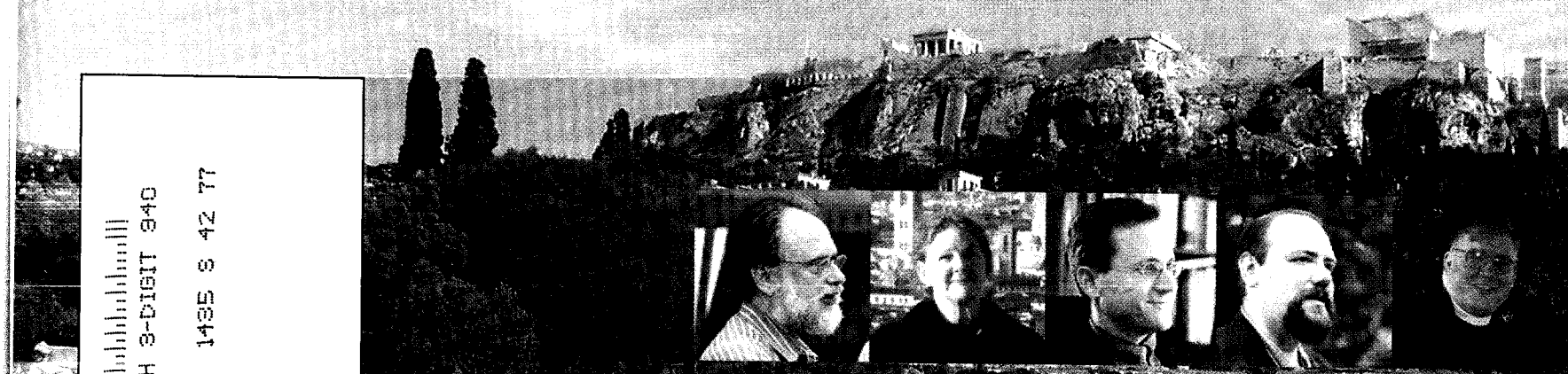
# The Rockford Institute's Fifth Annual Winter School

# The Greek Roots of Christendom

## *Athens and Delphi • January 20-27, 2010*



Winter School faculty include: Thomas and Gail Fleming, Christopher Check, Aaron D. Wolf, and special guest lecturer Fr. Hugh Barbour, O.Praem., Prior of Saint Michael's Abbey, Silverado, California.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**The price for the Winter School includes:**

- seven nights' (arrive Jan. 20; checkout on Jan. 27) lodging at the Acropolis Select Hotel (*www.acropoliselect.gr*), a fully renovated, three-star hotel within walking distance of the Acropolis;
- daily breakfast; five group meals;
- all lectures, discussions, and walking tours;
- selected entrance fees to museums;
- and a motor-coach excursion to Delphi.

## Prices

| | |
|---|---|
| Single | $1,695.00 EA ☐ |
| Couple | $2,495.00 EA ☐ |
| Shared Double | $1,395.00 EA ☐ |

Registration is limited. Previous Convivia have sold out. Registration fees are based on current exchange rates; the Institute reserves the right to assess a fee, should rates change significantly at the dollar's expense. The Institute will make every effort to help find roommates for students who wish to take advantage of the shared-double rate. If no roommate is available, the difference between the shared-double rate and the single-occupancy rate will be assessed.

Full-time undergraduate and graduate students interested in scholarships, anyone interested in supporting the Institute's Scholarship Fund, and anyone desiring more information should contact: Christopher Check, executive vice president, at (815) 964-5811 or visit www.rockfordinstitute.org

**To register, call (800) 383-0680**

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